ELINOR GLYN, GILBERT FRANKAU, JOHN GALSWORTHY

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How I Would Educate a Wife.

By Elinor Glyn.

Illustrated by Gladys Peto.

The wife who uses all her art and intelligence to keep herself attractive to her husband need have little fear of matrimonial shipwreck. This is the gist of Mrs. Glyn's wise and practical words. Let every wife who values her husband's faithfulness take them to heart.

THE aim of education in either a husband or a wife is to secure the happiness of the home, and of the pair.

So it is as well for the wife to understand that the position of husband does not hold out so many advantages as the position of wife, in the abstract.

Therefore the man is giving up more than the woman in undertaking it.

Now let no woman forget this.

By the unwritten law of custom a man is allowed more freedom than a woman. He can secure almost all the things a wife can give him from some other woman, without tying his hands at all, whereas unless she is prepared to lose her social status, and bring disgrace upon herself, a woman cannot obtain those things she is supposed to secure in marriage. Thus for her to be legally wedded is far more important than it could possibly be for a man.

Hence she ought to keep this in mind, and see that she makes the curtailing of the man's liberty worth while to him.

She should always make her husband feel that he has done well for himself, and that he can be envied by his fellows, for there is that in the nature of a man which makes him value most those things which other men want. And a really ghastly moment for a sensitive woman must be when she discovers her husband's friends are feeling commiseration for him.

Ouida once wrote—"Men are not vicious, they are but children"—and in many ways this is the truth. They are children in their craving for understanding and sympathy, and in their directness, and desire for contentment. A man must be a god who has not to be "humoured" upon any point! But it is just in how much a woman has to humour, which regulates her feelings of respect. Because if she must humour him, it proves to her that the man has vanity and egotism, and is unbalanced and unreasonable, or he would be able to grasp a plain presentment of facts, and not have to have them camouflaged. Humouring is quite a different thing from using tact. Using tact is in selecting suitable words, and suitable moments to suggest anything you want listened to sympathetically and not trying to thrust your own personality and ideas forward all the time.

"Humouring" a person is pandering to his vanity, knowing that you will probably gain your end when the vanity is fed sufficiently.

The women who deliberately "humour" to gain their ends are schemers by nature,

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and egotists as well, being quite unconcerned with anything but their determination to obtain their desires. The women with tact are generally creatures with kind hearts and fine understandings, which direct them to feel atmospheres, and so avoid saying or doing jarring things, to hurt or bore others.

Every woman, before marrying at all, ought to ask herself if she possesses tact. No matter how much in love the man may seem to be with her, it will require tact to keep him in this blissful state, because the moment she disillusions any one of his senses, he will no longer be under glamour, though he may go on feeling affection. Numbers of women forget this and become physically unattractive without a struggle after a year or two, and then wonder that their husbands' fancies have strayed!

The first thing a wife ought to decide is that she will use all her art and intelligence to keep herself attractive to her husband. She should arrange matters so that he never sees her in unappetising stages of her toilet, or in any circumstances in which she would not have liked him to see her when he was only her lover. She must keep ever before her that the man naturally has senses, and that she must not offend them.

Thousands of women wear shabby dressing gowns, ugly underclothes, unbecoming home gowns. They wear "any old thing," when if they really desire to keep their husbands as lovers no detail to enchant the eyes ought to be neglected, for their *tête à tête*, whatever economies must be practised at other times.

Your first object must be to please your husband's eye and so call forth his admiration, that is if your aim is to keep him as a lover and have joy in your home. Even in the class where money is not too plentiful, when you were a girl you took good care to finish your business worries, and make yourself look delectable before seeing your young man in the evening, no matter how tired you were. Then why suppose he will go on loving you if you neglect these points after you have embarked on matrimony, which brings into being far greater rivals for you to fight such as custom and continued propinquity, and the absence of factors to keep alight the man's hunting instinct—all things really more calculated to take the man from you than another girl's face when he was free.

Marriage usually makes the woman more fond and the man less fond, just for this reason, that women subconsciously look upon the wedding ceremony as the knell of effort, the thing which has secured to them for life a male creature, tied and bound. In these modern days the old idea of marriage has a good deal gone by the board. It is much oftener entered into now in the most casual spirit; with no sense of responsibility attached, each feels under no obligation to do his best. They satiate themselves with passion for a little, do not worry to please each other afterwards, and look ahead to divorce with complacency.

To such as these it is quite useless to speak—they must "dree their own weirds" and receive the punishments fate always brings down upon the heads of weaklings. It is only to those entering the bond with good intentions and real hope of continuing in happiness that I venture to write. And there must be some of these left in all classes.

Having grasped the importance of pleasing the man's eye, the next thing in which I would educate a wife is in upholding her own self-respect, and not giving way to any unreasonable whims, selfishnesses, rudenesses in her husband. If she takes pains to make herself desirable, she deserves fond attention in return, and she ought never to overlook, from the very first day, discourtesy or belittling. But I must reiterate strongly, marriage is a mutual benefit society, and she cannot expect any of these pleasant things of good manners and tenderness and consideration and admiration, unless she calls them forth by her own charms, and conduct.

They are not the automatic following of the marriage service, unaffected by one or the other person's attitude, though when a man is a real gentleman in spirit, he is never discourteous to women, no matter the provocation he receives, because he has realised that to use courtesy is due to himself. If a wife is attractive, delectable, loving and tactful, she has the right to expect devotion from her husband. If she disillusions his senses, freezes him with coldness, and bores him with selfishness and nagging, she has not the slightest right to demand anything of him but public respect while she remains his wife. Marriage is a bargain in which both are expected to fulfil their obligations.

There must be thousands of cases when the tiny, little mind of the wife hampers the husband's career, and his best efforts. She nags him when he returns home from his work tired and only needing sympathy and recreation, imposes her narrow views upon him, and demands attention and sacrifice to her vanity, when she gives no adequate return. Many husbands are brilliant and amusing when they go into society alone, but become suppressed nonentities when accompanied by Madame Other husbands have had

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brain enough to emerge from a lesser class into a greater, and are then dragged back by hopelessly mediocre wives.

All these things are tragedies which if the wife's education had been attended to would never have happened. After all most women would agree that they really desire their husbands' success. Then the sensible thing in that case is to analyse what will secure it, and what will curtail it, and then stamp out in themselves those qualities which most militate against the end in view.

Numbers of women destroy all possibility of happiness by their physical coldness, their failure to understand the passionate nature of man, and its necessities and desires. In many cases this is the man's fault, because he has been such an uncouth and selfish lover, never showing tenderness in words or caressing attentions. The coldest woman might probably respond to some man who knew how to treather differently.

But there are quantities of cases in England and America where the women's natures are really cold and negative, and they seem incapable of giving any response to passion. Men are never faithful to these women for long. They may—if they are religious—be faithful in the body, but their desires are always wandering, and their natures become stunted and warped. No happiness dwells in that home; it is at best a makeshift, continuing smoothly in appearance, because of the bowing to tradition and good taste in the man, and a fear of scandal.

Never think that in any circumstances you are at liberty to look at his letters.

The cold wife is a curse really, because she throws the man into temptation, and upon her head is the misery which then often enters the home. Do not marry if you are going to be as cold as ice. Just face the fact first that the man has asked you to marry him because he is in love with you (if it is a love match, and not for some mutual worldly consideration) and he expects you to give him all that possession implies, if you accept him. If you are cold and unresponsive, you are being an utter failure and disappointment, and if he had known you were going to be like that, he would not have asked you to marry him at all.

Realise that you are not fulfilling your side of the bargain, and so cannot expect him to fulfil his, and remain faithful to you. Study physiology and psychology and you will discover just what your inability to respond to your mate is doing, and then you will not be unreasonable, or a dog in the manger. I think the law ought to make it a cause for divorce if either is an utterly cold and unresponsive partner. It is pretty awful to have to live always together in any case, but when love is absent, and one or the other is frozen and unsatisfied, marriage is a hell.

On the other hand, numbers of men are selfish brutes, and only think of what they desire themselves, not at all of being so charming and tender that the woman, whether cold or passionate of nature, only desires to do whatever pleases them. When a man has what I call "it"—that quality of fascination which is composed of magnetic personality and appeals to the whole sex, not individuals only, and he makes love to even the coldest woman, she desires to *learn* warmth. She is as anxious to delight him, and content him, as her most passionate sister. Thus, much lies with the man—and only about one in ten thousand has really got "it!"

So what is to be done about it? If cold prudes were ashamed of themselves, and aware that they were wanting and at fault, as they would know it if they were deaf or had some other infirmity, it would not be so bad, and they would be more reasonable; but they invariably pride themselves upon their quality of physical coldness, and think it is a virtue. I wonder how many physically cold and highly virtuous

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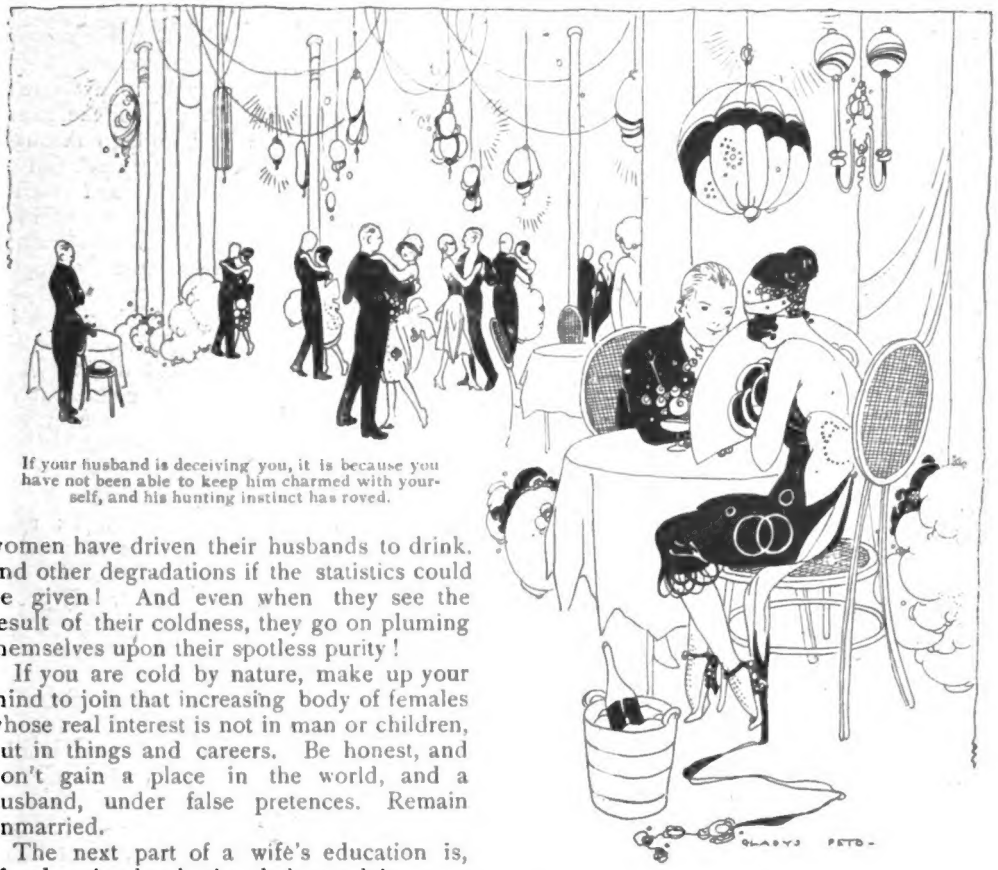

If your husband is deceiving you, it is because you have not been able to keep him charmed with yourself, and his hunting instinct has roved.

women have driven their husbands to drink, and other degradations if the statistics could be given! And even when they see the result of their coldness, they go on pluming themselves upon their spotless purity!

If you are cold by nature, make up your mind to join that increasing body of females whose real interest is not in man or children, but in things and careers. Be honest, and don't gain a place in the world, and a husband, under false pretences. Remain unmarried.

The next part of a wife's education is, after keeping her husband charmed in every way, to attend to his house and his comfort. Learn how to order a home, no matter how rich you may be, or how poor. Keep in view that you desire to retain happiness, and that peaceful and harmonious conditions aid it. Learn how to make the most of money, and give your husband the best value for that with which he entrusts you. Study his likes and dislikes. Never bore him with your own friends, if they are of the type in which he does not feel interested. See them when he is not at home. Be charming to *his* friends, even if they are not sympathetic to you. If he loves you he will gradually find them less attractive himself. Never ask questions, and above all things never, never think that in any circumstances you are at liberty to look at his letters, or get him to betray someone else's confidence by repeating to you what he or she may have confided in him, just because you feel you are his wife and automatically ought to know everything he does.

Realise, too, that if he is deceiving you, it is because you have not been able to keep him charmed with yourself, and his hunting instinct has roved. If you let him see that it has pained you, and then say no more about it, he will certainly return to you, when he is satiated with the other woman. No scenes which you make will alter his behaviour while the other woman holds his senses captive—he will merely deceive you more cunningly, in future, or leave you altogether. Your only chance is to furbish up your own charms, and recapture his love, or if you realise this is impossible, make the bargain with him that he treats you with every consideration and respect before the world, and with extra courtesy in your home, so that your dignity will be saved.

Many men who are deceiving their wives, and giving their love elsewhere, would be so grateful for such an attitude upon the wife's part, that she would receive everything to make life pleasant, and respect as well, and probably gratitude would re kindle the warmth of feeling also. If every wife could only realise the fact, it is *entirely* her own fault, or misfortune, if her husband ceases to be in love with her, and that being in love or not being in love, is not under the control

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of the human will, but is absolutely dependent upon what kind of attractions are coming from the other person, she would never blame the man, but begin asking herself in what way she herself had failed. This applies equally when a woman ceases to love a man.

So common-sense should direct a wife so to gain the confidence and respect of her husband in the early days, that general fidelity will become a sort of habit. But it is only when the body, mind and soul are mated that absolute fidelity can result. Whichever component part of this trinity is unsatisfied, the man or woman feeling the void will subconsciously be ready to be drawn away into infidelity to fill it.

So justice should make us—I am speaking to women now, but it applies equally to men—justice should make us examine ourselves and discover our possibilities. Are we mated in the soul? No, we will say. Well then we should understand that our partner will naturally be drawn to some other woman to find that satisfaction. Are we mated in the soul, but not in the mind? Yes. Well then the partner's mind will be drawn to another sympathetic mind.

Are we mated in both mind and soul but not the body? Yes. Then we should not be unreasonable and expect to keep the mate faithful in that respect. All this is the working of subconscious instinct and does not mean that people are fickle or disloyal, or bad or good. Perfect mating is the rarest thing on earth, and when it does occur circumstances do not alter it, nor poverty nor riches; nothing upsets the mutual trust and perfect contentment. But if more people realised that there are three planes on which human beings love, they would not be so ridiculously unreasonable, or blame their partners for looking elsewhere for that which they are unable to give them.

If I were a young woman in love, and contemplating matrimony, I would analyse the whole emotion I was feeling. I should sift until I discovered if my fiancé satisfied my highest thought, if he understood the *fine*, if his mind was as cultivated as my mind, or if it was just a physical, passionate desire which was uniting us. If I could answer myself truly that he satisfied me in all ways I should know real happiness awaited me. If I found, facing it fearlessly, that his soul never met mine, nor his mind, I should then ask myself would the other be enough always?

If I were so in love that I believed it would be, then I would register a vow that afterwards I would not reproach him when he began to fail me and I began to grow hungry. In whatever of the three component parts of love I knew, after my analysis, that we did not share, I would register the same determination. Then I should go through the same process as regards myself, and in whichever of the three I *knew* I failed towards him I would make up my mind I would not be jealous when the time came for his unsatisfied craving to turn elsewhere for comfort.

Use common-sense in everything, even in the most trying of all bondages, that of being a wife. Look to the end and decide what you really want,—happiness, contentment, peace, or discord?—and then use as much intelligence to gain your end as you would put into any material thing you had set out to accomplish.

Women so often forget that man's real interest is not woman. She is the accessory, the pleasure, the "thing apart," but not the sole goal of all his desires, and a really great mind in a man only thinks of women in his moments of leisure and recreation. Of course the vanity of a mediocre woman would make her resent this, but it is a fact all the same, and a clever woman realises it and accepts it, and then puts her whole charms forward to make the man enjoy his pleasure.

Of course the case can be turned round and a really fine mind in a woman may discover itself mated with a brainless sensualist. Then the woman must use this mind of hers to make the best of it, or get out of the situation altogether, knowing that if she had had the sense to analyse beforehand as I have suggested she would not have made the mistake, and therefore must not blame the man. What I resent is husband and wife reproaching each other, making scenes and troubles about matters over which the reproached one had no control, for which they themselves were primarily responsible.

To sum up, I should ask a wife before marriage if she really meant to play the game, and if so, that she should put aside all prejudices, rip off all the tickets attached to things by convention, and learn what the things really mean, and then use her whole intelligence to make the affair go along smoothly.

If the woman is reasonable and holds her own self-respect high, and has a sense of justice, she can reign as a queen in the heart of her husband, and very probably keep his love as well.

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Beautiful Things.

By M. L. C. Pickthall.

Illustrated by John Campbell.

"JULES," said Peat thoughtfully, "it would be a good thing for me if I too could get my grub off the roadside."

Jules had an optimistic speckled ear and a pessimistic grey one. He wagged the latter as if to remind Peat that it was some time since he'd tasted oats.

"Well, I know," assented Peat, "but if you had to graze half the night I let you sleep all the afternoon, anyway."

Jules blew gently into the heart of a grass-tuft. A white moth flew out, dazed in the sun; it took shelter beneath a green leaf while Jules devoured its former home and Peat for the *n*th time, went through his pockets.

"Not a darned thing," was his conclusion. "There's my knife, but I can't do without it. There's my old nickel watch, but it was Grandfather Nelson Pym's, and I daren't go back home and tell 'em I swapped it for a bite of grub. Could never live it down, Jules. Never. There's a handkerchief. I s'pose no one'd want that, anyway. What else? There's the sample, of course."

He went to the disreputable trap concealed among the bushes and groped beneath the seat. He produced a large wooden case, which he looked at with dark disfavour. On the case was stencilled in gay red letters.

"The Housekeeper's Best
Is Summerby's Nest."

He knew what was inside the case without looking. For weeks he had been touring the country with Jules, booking orders for Summerby's Warranted Non-Scorch Patent-Grip Aluminium Saucepans, Seven in one Nest, Seven. He had done his part. But Summerby hadn't. "It's getting quite conspicuous," he told Jules, "the way Summerby fails to part with the salary."

He pushed the case back and sat down by the wheel. Two miles ahead was the town where he had hoped to sup. He whistled pensively. For it is not possible to get a supper for four pence, which was all he had remaining from Summerby's last remittance. "Besides," he said, "I'll need all that to tell Summerby what I think of him. The letter 'll be overweight, Jules. It means a hollow night for one of us, old fellow."

His eyes, resting on the summer woods, were content enough. They held the lover-look. "I've nothing to sell for my supper," he said again, dreamily, "and I can't sing for it, and it 'll be too late in the day to work for it. And yet there's not a spray of that wild rose or a tassel of those green flowers that isn't worth *pounds*—all the money of the world—if they did but know it."

He looked up into the deeps of the bass-wood boughs above him. Evening bees filled the green layers with a murmur like the sea; the scent of the pendant blossoms was heavy as honey.

"I wonder," he said, "if there's a soul in that tight, tidy, blind little town that'd give a shilling for a basswood bough!"

He laughed presently, and sprang to his feet. "Jules," he said, "I'm going to see!"

He caught a swaying tasselled branch and cut it through two feet from the tip. He was smiling to himself. "I'm going to peddle beauty instead of saucepans," he told Jules; "do you think anyone will buy?"

Jules snorted as if in mild derision, wagging his grey ear.

Peat pushed through the bushes to the road; they were thick. Glancing back, he was assured that no one on the road could see Jules or the trap. Whistling, he started to walk to the town.

He did not like the town when he reached it. It was just large enough to ignore a stranger, just small enough to be suspicious of him when he thrust himself upon its attention. It was dusty, too, and full of the smell of suppers. It had cut down most of its trees and planted gilt railings and geraniums. It was prosperous.

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Peat went on until he came to a pink brick building where lived an insurance agent by the name of Means. Here Peat entered an office, where a man sat behind a sticky roll-top desk. Peat said: "Are you Mr. Means?"

"That's me," said Mr. Means. "Do you want to be insured? Come back at——."

"No," answered Peat, "I don't want to be insured. I want to ask you what you think this is worth?"

He stretched the basswood bough across the top of the desk.

All the honey-warmth of summer had entered the office with the bough, as well as a pair of wandering, gold-dusted bees. Means did not notice these things. He was staring coldly at Peat.

Peat said: "Don't you think it's pretty enough to be worth a shilling?"

Means' face flushed. "I'll tell *you* somethin' you ain't asked," he said. "Follow this street a bit and take the first to the right. That'll bring you to the Asylum. Good evenin'."

"Good evening," said Peat cordially. He liked Means no better than the town.

In the next hour he offered the basswood bough for sale eleven times with the same unvarying unsuccess.

At last he came to a street of small wooden houses, one of which had been turned into a shop. The window of the shop seemed to contain nothing but wrapping-paper. But a light burnt dimly in the dusk within. He opened the door and entered. The basswood bough in his hand was now wet with dew.

A girl was packing a suitcase in the middle of the shop, which was empty. A small oil lamp with a pink globe burnt on a shelf. She turned. Peat saw a dark, irregular face, eyes brilliant as the eyes of someone in pain, She said curtly: "This shop's closed. What do you want?"

A curious sense at that moment possessed Peat that he had seen this girl before, that she had spoken those words to him before, that his own answer had been known and rehearsed from the beginning of things when he said smiling: "I don't want to buy, I want to sell."

"What?"

"I want to sell this."

"That?" she stared at him. "Why, it's only a basswood bough."

"Just so. Is it worth anything to you?"

Still staring at him, she slowly took the bough, lifting it to her face. Her lips were cooled with the dew. Suddenly, her eyes glimmered into tears, though they yet remained steadfastly on Peat's face.

"There was a tree in the garden at home," she said. "I'd forgotten how sweet it was." From a shabby purse she shook a single coin and held it to him. "Will you take this?" she asked him smiling. "It's the last I've got. Is it enough for your basswood bough?"

"Too much, if it's the last."

"You can have it. You'd better. It's my own and honest. I'll have plenty more to-morrow—but not of that kind. Will you take it, whoever you are, and—and go?"

Peat was silent. He was aware in every nerve that the dark, dismantled shop housed both passion and despair. While he hesitated, she faced him, little and slim, and fearless; some great emotion in her seemed to have cast out all lesser ones. She said again: "I've no more. Take it and go."

"You're in trouble," returned Peat abruptly.

"You're wrong," she answered quietly. "To-night I'm getting out of trouble."

"I'm a stranger to you," continued Peat in the same quick, low voice. "You don't even know my name, nor I yours. Perhaps in all our lives, we'll know each other five minutes, an hour, two—just speak and pass. But if I see you in trouble for that five minutes, that hour, it's my right to offer you help as much as if I'd known you twenty years. Won't you take that help?"

"What do you mean?"

His eyes were on her. He struck his hands together softly. "Oh, I know," he said, "I *know* you need it!"

"Listen." On some queer impulse she went close to him, looked in his face. "To-night, for the first in more than a year I don't need help."

"You may need it all the more for thinking you don't."

"To-night, for the first time, I'm going to help myself to all the things I want most in life."

"Tell me."

"This shop was mine. I owned it. I ran it. I sold pretty things. Flowers, fruit, preserves in little blue pots, anything so long as it was pretty. I'm ugly, but I've been mad for pretty things all my life. But people wouldn't buy them. I—got into debt. I worked and worked. I slaved for the ugly things, the common needs. It was no good. And I'm tired. *Tired.*" Suddenly she clenched her hands, she began to tremble. "I'm starved," she said hoarsely, "starved for the things thousands of girls take for granted—starved for beauty. So I'm going away, to join a man who'll give me beautiful things for awhile, and nothing else. Nothing

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She slowly took the bough, lifting it to her face. . . . "There was a tree in the garden at home," she said. "I'd forgotten how sweet it was."

else." The passion died out of her; she looked at Peat with a pale dignity. "Now you know all of me there ever will be to know," she said. "Will you go?"

"No."

"You can't stop me, you know."

"I don't mean to try."

She waited. Her face had gone very white.

"But maybe I can help you all the same," continued Peat cheerfully. "It's now about eight o'clock. You're packing to catch the 11.40 at Cedar Mill?"

"Yes," she agreed slowly.

"And you were going to walk there, carrying the suitcase? Yes? Well, Jules and my trap are hidden two miles out of the town. If you'll let me, I'll take you in to Cedar Mill, or at least, Jules will."

"Who is Jules?"

"Jules is a friend of mine," said Peat thoughtfully, "who gives very good advice. He has four legs," he finished hastily. "Well?"

She was still gazing at him strangely. "You won't try to stop me?"

"No."

"You'll help me to do *this*?"

"Yes."

Suddenly she broke, shrank. She turned to the suitcase again, and he knew she was weeping. "I—I thought you'd try and stop me," she murmured vaguely. "You were a stranger. But I thought you'd care."

The words were a breath. He stood motionless; fighting the longing to cry to her, hold her, plead with her—and lose her. When he could command his voice, he said: "We'd best start as soon as you're ready." She slipped on a coat and a veiled hat and blew out the lamp. He lifted the suitcase. As she emerged from the dusk, he saw that she was carrying the basswood bough. She passed him, he closed the door behind her; and its sweetness was like a cool hand laid along his eager lips.

He dropped behind her while they walked through the town. She did not seem to know if he was there or not. It was nearly dark, but he could have followed her among a world of shadows. Here and there in the circles of light cast by the street lamp, he saw a little blossom fallen from the bough she

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carried. He smiled, feeling in his heart a stirring as of leaves and unfolding bloom.

They left the town, and here Peat walked beside her.

The woods were still and hushed, but beauty lay on them like a light; they distilled an essence sweet as song. In the hollows of the road a light mist lay, so white it seemed heir feet should have been silvered from walking through it. When they came to the great basswood beneath which Peat had left Jules and the trap, it was like a cloud against the lesser stars; bees and birds slept in it.

Jules slept too, with grass hanging out of his mouth. He was reproachful when Peat waked him and harnessed him. Peat drove out on to the silent road where the girl waited. She climbed into the trap beside him. He lifted the suitcase and stowed it under the seat with the jingling sample. He said: "Go on, now, Jules." Jules roused from a doze; his heavy hoofs began to thud softly in the dust. The girl sat dumb and motionless beside Peat, the basswood bough across her knees.

By and by Peat said chattily, in the tone of one who makes small-talk at an afternoon-tea: "This fellow you're goin' to—is he young?"

"I don't know."

"Young as me?" insisted Peat.

"No. Oh, no."

In Peat's mind the last excuse for the unknown fellow vanished. Holding the reins in one hand, he pounded his fist softly on his knee. Between the fist and the knee he visioned a face—the kind of face bred in cities, beside which open ruffianism becomes clean and comely; he pounded harder.

"I suppose he lets on he cares for you a lot?" he suggested.

She turned to him with her strange innocence.

"Is it likely anyone 'd care a lot for me?"

"Oh, well, *some* might," answered Peat, cautiously. He gripped his hands as he said it. Just to touch her, to gather her to his heart, to kiss those bitter words from her lips, to wake her from her dark dream! "You never can tell how those things 'll go."

"Well, he cares enough to give me those things I've come to realise are the only things *I* care for." She laughed a little, hard, wretched laugh. Her eyes held the oddest mixture of distrust and hope as she looked at Peat. "You see, I know what I'm doing," she said, "and we're both honest."

"Honest?" breathed Peat. "Oh, help!"

"What's the matter?"

"Hurt myself," explained Peat briefly "Sciatica in this knee."

"And no one will make me change my mind."

"Who's trying to?" asked Peat. "Oh, *gittup* Jules!"

"No one," came the ghost of a voice beside him. "No one cares enough for that."

They travelled a mile in utter silence, broken only by the increasing squeak of one wheel.

Then Peat said suddenly: "Beauty—" Jules lifted his speckled ear. "You were talking of that a little while ago."

"Well?"

"Well—as a matter of impersonal interest, I'd like to know why money should come to mean beauty to you?"

"Because I've had so little of either, I s'pose."

"Pshaw!" Peat waved his arm angrily. "You haven't had diamond necklaces and silk stockings and—and *crêpe-de-Chine* nighties. I suppose you mean that." His voice deepened. "You've had dawn," he said rapidly, "and flowers, and trees, and the good eyes of men and women. Listen. Back there in the woods is a little clearing by a farm where I camped yesterday. It was all grown over with wild geranium and may-apple, and birds were singing in the elms. When I went to the farm to get some milk a woman with flaxen hair, in a blue dress, was giving her child a drink out of a new tin dipper. Beauty? There, in every gutter, if we'd pick it up!"

There was a pause. Then the girl turned on him fiercely. "You *shan't* stop me!" she cried.

"Have I tried to?" Peat spoke through his teeth. "Have I—Whoa, Jules!"

Jules looked round, grunted and stopped. The trap tilted slowly over. The girl rolled out into the grass, followed by the suit-case and the Sample, which opened, and scattered the Seven-In-One-Nest about the dewy dust. Peat fell out last. Jules, after one resounding kick at the trap, began to eat grass.

Presently Peat stood up. He said: "The wheel's off."

"Then we'll lose the train!"

"Why?" Peat was collecting the Seven-In-One and did not look at her.

She said faintly: "I've—I've gone weak all over. I couldn't walk so far."

"You won't have to." Peat was furiously polishing the least of the Seven on his coat. "You can ride Jules."

He repacked the Seven, unhitched Jules,

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He lifted her and set her on the beast's broad back and walked beside her, the reins looped over his arm, carrying the suit-case. [*Page 472, col. 2.*]

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and backed the trap into the bushes. Then he lifted the girl and set her gently on Jules' broad back. "Go on, Jules," he said. Jules moved forward slowly, lipping at the sweet, moist grass. Peat walked alongside, the reins looped over his arm, carrying the suit-case.

"The moon'll be up by the time you get to Cedar Mill," he said presently.

"Yes."

"I suppose that fellow will meet the train in the city?"

"Yes."

"Why, you see," said Peat cheerily, "your plan's bound to work out as—as smooth as syrup!"

She did not look at him. Swaying to the motion of the heavy horse, her eyes were on the stars. It seemed to Peat that he had walked like that for years, that he could walk like that for ever, through the tender night, in a world that could never grow old.

They crossed a stream by its ford; Jules lipped at the sweet water; he seemed to be drinking broken stars. Peat felt its cool thrill about his knees. An owl floated noiselessly down the channel; the loveliness of the night folded them round.

They climbed the bank. Beyond two roads forked.

"Which is the road to Cedar Mill?" Peat asked.

"That." She pointed to the right.

"No," said Peat quietly. "You're wrong. It's the other." She did not reply. He headed Jules down the road to the left.

The woods thinned. Clearings appeared, fields, meadows, houses. A silver light grew slowly. At first it was as if the dew became luminous; then, beyond the woods, the moon rose.

"There's Cedar mill," said Peat.

She looked. "Set me down, please," she requested in a minute. "I—I'll walk the rest of the way."

"Right!" Peat agreed cheerfully. "P'r'aps it would be best." He lifted her down and set her feet gently in the dust. He gave her the suit-case. An instant she hesitated. He held out his hand.

"Well, good-bye," he told her, "you know your way. I'm glad I was able to help you."

She turned on him a white, wild face. She struck down his hand. "Glad?" she whispered. "*Glad?* I'll never forgive you!" She walked rapidly down the road, and Peat watched her. He knew again that she was weeping.

Peat was very tired. He turned to Jules and leaned his head against Jules' hairy neck. He was waiting.

He stood so some time, motionless. He hardly appeared to live. Now and then he spoke to the horse. "Oh, Jules!" he whispered. "Jules—the little girl! The *little* girl!"

Jules' grey ear wagged doubtfully.

"She doesn't know anything. Oh, Jules! My *little*—fool!"

He waited. As the minutes passed his heart seemed to shrink and grow cold. He felt the warmth and fragrance drained out of the night. "Jules," he breathed, "I haven't lost her, have I?"

Then, far in the silvered night, he heard a sound.

It was the sound of light feet running.

He thought, as he waited, that those returning feet were running straight into his heart. But he did not stir. Even when they stumbled and came slowly and stopped beside him he did not look up.

Presently, the smallest, humblest voice in the world said to him: "I've come back."

"I knew you would."

"I couldn't do it. I couldn't."

"I knew you couldn't."

"Did you know all the while?"

"All the while."

"Then you cared, after all?"

Peat stood still, his face hidden on Jules' neck. The girl came nearer. He felt her hand on his, a brief, trembling touch. She just whispered: "Then you *did* care?"

Peat looked up.

A slow awe grew in her face, a great light born in abasement.

"For *me?*" she said,

"Yes."

There was a silence. Presently she said meekly: "Friend, will you take me home?"

Peat turned Jules. He lifted her and set her on the beast's broad back and walked beside her, the reins looped over his arm, carrying the suit-case. All the world about them was silent, silvered with the moon and the dew.

They came to the place where Peat had left the trap. By then the world was swinging for him in a slow silvered ring, his feet were lead, he was tired. For a minute, when he stopped the horse, the moon and the trees and the road went out in a spinning shadow. The girl slipped down and ran to him. Through the shadow he saw her scared face and tried to smile at her.

"Oh, what *is* it?"

"I was just wondering," said Peat vaguely, "when I'd get something to eat."

"You're *hungry!*"

"Since this morning," he confessed.

"But I've buns and eggs in my suit-

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case!" Her face turned darkly scarlet. "I put them in for fear—in case I changed my mind and came back from the city."

"Oh, heavens!" said Peat. "Fetch 'em out!"

He sat in the dewy grass and she brought him sandwiches and buns and hard-boiled eggs, and gave them to him on her knees, as though she longed to serve him so. He made her eat with him. Since they had no plates, they used the smallest saucepans of the Seven, and the moon turned them into silver rarer than the earth can show.

"I've been thinking," said Peat suddenly, waving a bun at the moon.

"Well?" she said shyly.

"I've been thinking," said Peat, "that you'd do much better in that shop if you had a man, a—a husband, say, to help you. Jules also would be very useful. We could get some land, and Jules and I could work it, and we'd pay off the debts. I've no money, nor have you. But we've better things. And later we could make it a lovely shop. We'd sell nothing but what was beautiful. We'd sell, oh, flowers and tomatoes, and pickled cabbage—it's the rarest colour!—and ducklings, and apples, and eggs, and aquamarines, and Chinese embroidery, and sky-rockets, and—and saucepans. I'd work outside and you should mind the shop. Don't you think it's a first-class idea?"

The girl sat perfectly still, her head bent. In a little she said slowly: "If I hadn't seen your face when I came back to you, when you waited for me on the road, I should think you were fooling me, because I was the kind of girl who deserves no better."

"But you saw my face."

The dark head bent lower still.

"Dear!" said Peat suddenly.

She covered her face with her hands. "But—if you only have beautiful things in the shop, you couldn't have me."

"From the first minute I saw you," said Peat, "you seemed to me the most beautiful thing in all the world."

Free of the soft-leaved trees, the moon floated—the moon of summer. Presently the girl got up and began to search in the grass where they had fallen out when the wheel came off the trap. In a little while she found what she sought, and held it in her arms to her heart, weeping happy tears as gentle as the dew.

It was only a blossomed basswood bough.

Jules, who was grazing, suddenly twitched erect his speckled ear.

TO DULCIE.

(*After F. G. K.*)

I found her in the shade of Spring
And bound her with a chain of roses;
She felt it not and slumbered on.

I saw her, and in that fair spot
The freedom of my heart was gone;
I felt it well yet knew it not.

Around I heard the thrushes sing,
I rustled on the chain of roses
And whispered low and broke the trance,

Her eyes unclosed and in one glance
The freedom of her heart was gone;
And Heaven shone upon the roses.

William Blathwayt.

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"You're simply ridiculous, Danforth! 'Alive'? . . . So is a pig!"

"Hit 'Em and Hold 'Em!"

By E. R. Crowell.

Illustrated by W. S. Bagdatopulos.

I.

"He has absolutely the most perfect torso you ever saw, Edith," continued the young man, waving his tea-cup to mark an enthusiasm usually foreign to circles where portions of the human anatomy are called "torsos."

"I haven't spent my young life collecting views of torsos," responded Edith Carlton, "and there's no reason for smashing that Satsuma vase, even if your beloved Buck *is* the Apollo Belvedere of the Stevedores' Union." Her tone was bantering, but a perceptible rancour showed through.

"Well—at any rate, he is," reiterated her *fiancé*. Danforth Saunders, feeling the undertone, but attributing it to the general petulance of the petulant sex. "You ought to see him. He's the real thing. If you'd come down to the docks with me——"

Edith Carlton's hazel eyes darkened. "I am not coming down to the docks with you, my dear, and I'm getting decidedly tired of your dragging your docks up here."

"Oh, Edith, what's the——"

"I'll tell you. We have been engaged two weeks. During thirteen days of that period I have heard of nothing but the beauties of your docker friends' anatomies, or the naïve way in which they beat their wives. You haven't taken me to a single place in the daytime since you discovered your dockers. If it wasn't for my ring there'd be no visible evidence that I am engaged."

"Rather hard on me, aren't you, dear? I've not gone over to the Philistines entirely, but they are really a lot more interesting than you've any idea of. Somehow I always thought *we* were the only class that actually existed, but, do you know, I've come to think those people are about a hundred per cent. more alive than we are."

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One of Edith's eyebrows slanted at an ominous angle. This was becoming serious! Danforth was actually *interested* in those working-men! That sort of thing was all very well in books, or to get votes, but to believe in it——!

"You're simply ridiculous, Danforth! 'Alive!' Of course they are. So is a pig. But to think of them as equals! Dirty, stupid, ignorant creatures like that!"

"They're not stupid, Edith. That's where we've been making our mistake all along." His voice had suddenly become earnest and he leant forward with emphasis. "*We're* the ones who are ignorant. Why, if we had to take care of ourselves——"

She gave a gasp of exasperation. "Spare me the details. I'll acknowledge that I haven't the most remote idea of how to cook cabbage. But I haven't hitherto found it essential." She frowned, her slim shoulders shrugging in impatience. "Does it occur to you that you're a dreadful bore to-day?"

He rose quickly. "I've been a bit of a nuisance, old girl. Forgive me. Ring up Betty and we'll go down to Asti's and dance. There—now do you love me again?"

He smiled whimsically and extended his hand with a gesture that sent something leaping to her eyes. But the gesture ended in a cigarette, the spurt of a match. She laughed casually and went to the telephone.

"Play about: I'll be back soon," she called as she left him to dress. Danforth watched her departing figure with an odd speculation in his eyes, and strolled out to the little balcony.

What would it be like to care for a woman as Buck cared for his? He had seen Buck—six feet of youth and drunk as a lord—snatch and kiss his Italian Pasquala while all the world looked on and laughed, and Pasquala ripped the skin from his arms with her indignant, but delighted, nails. Perhaps they were "different," as Edith had said, but he was beginning to have his doubts. *Were* he and his "different" or had they just been cheated by a misfortune of birth, cheated out of the real thing? He saw for an instant *his* girl in *his* arms—and then three generations of humour arose and laughed at him. For his girl was not Pasquala, but Edith Carlton. Still—under the humour something stirred hungrily. Suppose Edith, satin-smooth, flower-sweet, cool as moonlight, wise as—anything—were suddenly fierce and young and foolish. Suppose—— He gripped the railing with restless fingers.

Inside, before an array of crystal and gold, lace, perfume and creams, Edith Carlton sat gazing at herself in the glass with clouded eyes. What was the matter with things, anyhow?—with Danforth, with the world, with herself? With herself most of all—what was the matter? Hadn't everything gone according to plan? She had known they would probably be engaged some day—had been quite acutely aware of an impending declaration.

Without a word of warning he had turned and caught her to him. She had gasped, tried to laugh—then had forgotten everything as she felt his lips come down. She closed her eyes now at the memory, and quivered a little. It seemed to leap at her, that kiss—to leap and take her strength until she lay dizzy, while the blood pounded through her throat.

Then as suddenly he had let her go and walked roughly away, while she swayed and clutched at calmness. He had come back and made a joke of it all and proposed in exactly the words she had thought he would use, and she had accepted him. After that he had kissed her with perfect composure. It had been utterly according to tradition and neither had reverted to that whirling moment.

Surely she did not want any more cave man exhibitions like that first one? All that sort of thing was miserably common—like those disgusting dockers whom Danforth was admiring with such enthusiasm, like those couples one saw on the film. As if any woman who let herself go like that could hope to hold a man!

II.

With the coming of the spring the stevedores went on strike.

Within twenty four hours the docks were tied up in a violent industrial cramp and littered with blissful groups of inactive gentlemen discussing their wrongs. Superficially they might have merited Edith Carlton's sniff of disgust. Niceties of the toilet play no part in a stevedore's vital interests. But, if one used an imagination instead of a nose, they were as glorious a flowering as spring can show anywhere. You do not make stevedores out of duds. Those great creatures, sprawled blissfully in the sun, were the last word in human machinery.

It was this highly-coloured human ferment that had so interested Danforth. Hitherto life had been a matter of people who had smart cars, butlers, and country houses, or people who didn't have them and were correspondingly drab. Having been born to the cars and butlers, he had accepted them as a matter of course and had gone through his days without

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As recognition crashed upon Edith a hand darted out, fingers closed round the straining collarless throat—the head went back and down——

any particular hunger or curiosity. Suddenly, in a moment of odd relaxation, he had stumbled on this other world, where none of his values was of the slightest importance. It didn't need cars or butlers to keep these chaps alive, nor tailoring, nor university degrees. There they were, with no more prospects of a career than his Airedale, yet full of the joy of living from their unbrushed hair to their sockless feet. How did they do it?—that was what he wanted to know.

His imagination seemed to carry him away. He could see himself on the roadway of the sea, hear the bubble and kick of the foam, feel the slash of the wind and the muffling hush of the fog. Something within him flung back to a lustier age. He could almost remember the clip of adventuring, of trading and bartering—and high-handed stealing—of coming to grips with men and affairs in little matters of loot. He was, indeed, so taken with the idea that he decided to mention it to Edith on the morning after the dance.

"Edith, don't *you* ever want to do anything but eat and be spoiled and buy clothes?

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—Her breath went out with a whisper, a gasp, a yell—her eyes flared wide—her slim young body . . . flashed forward. [*Page* 478, *col.* 2.]

Wouldn't anything make you want to break loose and—and—oh, well, break loose?"

"I don't know what you mean by breaking loose," she replied, "but if you're hoping to see me doing emotional somersaults, like that Italian female you were telling me about, you're going to be badly mistaken. The women in my family stopped chewing their gentlemen friends about 300 B.C." Whereupon they parted with mutual relief.

All this brings us to fifty husky ex-labourers a-sprawl on Pier 38 and Danforth Saunders quietly insinuating himself in their midst, while his lady love took tea elsewhere. No one paid any attention to him. "If *this* had floated in on the tide, why—let it float," was their attitude towards him and all other alien phenomena.

Meanwhile other issues reached a head. Violets might bloom and stevedores go on a strike, but ships must be laden, springtime or no. If the sons of the unions would not load them, others would. A double file of men began to move quietly into a back alley, and from there into the street, policemen riding as they came.

Round the corner of the warehouse on Pier 38 came the strike-breakers. Peace brooded over the face of the earth; peace had attended their progress. Languidly the police lagged behind. For an instant there was a silence, broken only by the soft lisping of the water against the piles, while the Fifty Stevedores arose as one man and faced the Strike-breakers. Then — somebody spat. Somebody yelled "Scab!" With the snarling bay of fighting dogs they closed, and a dirty fist hit Danforth Saunders on the nose.

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He gasped, felt the blood trickling warmly into his open mouth. Then something seemed to lift within him—air—fire—a wild singing and throbbing—clearly he caught the crazed words, the grit of teeth, the grunt of men kicking and men kicked, the smell of frenzied, hot bodies. Then with a lunge that split his shoulder seams and burst his vest buttons he went, blood-blind and rejoicing, into the fight of his life.

Pasquala heard of it where she was peacefully doing her hair and eating a sandwich. Down she came at a run—her mouth wide open, yelling in unrestricted Italian, her hair lashing back against her full bust and corset cover of cheap lace.

Edith Carlton heard of it over tea. Someone hurried by with an excited word that there was a big dock fight on at Pier 38 and a dozen men killed. It caused a vague ripple of interest through the shaded lights—then suddenly the lights seemed to go out entirely for Edith, and the room dropped away. She remembered that Danforth Saunders had gone to Pier 38. Danforth—a "dozen men killed." Still, of course——

She arose and made her excuses smilingly. She called a taxi with the Carlton calmness and gave her order in the Carlton voice. Then she closed her eyes. How close, how very close he had been in that one brief instant before he actually proposed.

"I can't get no nearer, and you'd better not try, miss," the chauffeur was saying. "The police reserves ain't come yet 'n' it ain't no place for a lady. If there's anything I can do——?"

"No—I'm going on," she said.

How she got there she never knew—stumbling, slipping, squirming past a jammed and swearing mass of men, her hat gone, her dress torn, her eyes blind to everything but the warehouse looming ahead, hearing only the terrible fighting *gr-r-r-r* that rose from the core of the crowd. The next thing she knew she was grasping a woman's naked shoulder and the woman was yelling like a devil.

"Stop it!" she said. "Stop it! Don't make that horrible noise. It won't help. The police will come and then it will be all right."

The yells stopped and Pasquala turned with a glare of rage. "Poleece, poleece," she panted. "Poleece he come, an' my Buck he die! My Buck—him I marry this Springa—he in there now an' they kicka de daylight outa heem! Then you coma along and tella me—*me*—to stoppa de yell! You maka me seek—damn fool! I betta you yell if your fella be in there and getta his daylight keeked out!"

Above the grunting, swaying mass a face shot upward—Danforth's face smeared and purple, hair in a reeking mass over its bulging eyes, mouth grinning wide—a Thing blood-hungry and getting what it wanted. As recognition crashed upon Edith a hand darted out, fingers closed round the straining collarless throat—the head went back and down.

Her breath went out with a whisper, a gasp, a yell—her eyes flared wide—her slim young body, straight and supple and strong as a boy's, flashed forward. Into that mass of men she shot like a bolt of fire, while beside her, half naked, battling, and howling like a fiend, rose and sank, squirmed and bit, the form of Pasquala.

III.

The reserves had come. They had clubbed and hit, and once more peace lay upon a twilight bay. The ambulances had carted off the remains, gory but very much alive. Home Pasquala and Buck had wended their triumphant way, his battered hand around her shameless and adoring shoulders, her cut lips singing under his kisses.

On a packing box, well hidden, sat a young man and woman. Blood dried on their faces, dirt clotted their hair, and their respective noses swelled apace. With the remains of a French handkerchief she bound up his torn ear.

"Edith," he faltered, "I don't understand. You—you fought like that for me because you—cared—Edith?"

She looked up quickly, then down again, an odd little smile twisting her lips.

"No-o—not exactly," she said.

He looked bewildered. "Then—why?"

For an instant she did not answer. Her face was turned away, but he saw the deep scarlet creeping across the white flesh under the torn blouse, saw it mount the round throat in which a little pulse was beating, beating, and then throb across her averted cheek. Slowly she lifted her face, and he gasped, a weakness and fire sweeping him at the look in her eyes.

Edith look like that!

The pupils were dilated and smouldering, the red lips were parted and quivering, and her whole body swayed towards him as she answered: "No, not just 'cared,' Dan! I forgot all about caring—my kind of caring. But I learnt all about another kind, Pasquala's kind. I only knew——"

His hands were straining at her now, his shoulders rounding about her.

"I only knew," she whispered, "that they were kicking the daylight out of you and you were—*mine!*"

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Barring Accidents.

By Rex Colvile.

Illustrated by Thomas Henry.

Mr. Pickering closed the front door of the semi-detached desirable suburban villa behind him and sent forth a prim, precise, little cough as harbinger of his return to domestic life.

"Ahem!"

Usually this harbinger of his homecoming was greeted instantly by a gasping, fluttering cry of welcome from the tiny kitchen, followed almost at once by the gratifying, if flushed, appearance of his wife with what Mr. Pickering called the evening kiss.

But this evening the herald proclaimed in vain. No cry of welcome, no flushed appearance, no evening kiss answered its summons.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickering, a little shocked by this fracture of routine. Four steps down the passage brought him to the small but tastefully-red dining-room. Entering, he found the table laid for the evening meal, the meal which he was accustomed to think of as tea and refer to as dinner. It calmed his slightly ruffled spirit to note that an open sardine-tin revealed its closely cuddled tenants, and that fascinatingly adjacent thereto a green, glass dish hospitably displayed the brisk bright forms of many radishes. Mr. Pickering was partial to sardines with radishes for a relish.

But the temporary calm induced by the contemplation of these articles of food was wholly dissipated when, walking to the French window, he peered out on to the meagre strip of garden and observed his wife in earnest conversation with, and divided only by the garden wall from, the woman—he could call her nothing else—next door.

Like Herminius, Mr. Pickering "started back." When first he and his wife and Jim-kin had become tenants of The Rhododendrons it had been agreed—or, rather, he had stated the fact, and his wife had dutifully agreed, and Jim-kin, being asleep, had by his silence acquiesced—that it would not be necessary to know their next-door neighbours, for three reasons: (a) That one couldn't be too careful; (b) that one gained in dignity by keeping oneself to oneself; and (c) that one must draw the line somewhere, and that Mr. Pickering emphatically made this rudimentary artistic effort at being on terms of social intercourse with a bookmaker's family.

This had been six months ago. For six months the Pickerings had not been—socially—aware of the Levensteins' existence, and yet—and yet (Mr. Pickering's pale eyes goggled alarmingly) there was Mary's neat, brown-swathed head in the closest proximity to the tousled flaring *abandon* of that of the woman next door. Hobnobbing! Mary and the bookmaker's wife!

Mr. Pickering opened the French window, and as he did so he saw the woman from next door hand Mary a newspaper-covered parcel, and heard Mary say: "Oh, thank you ever so much!"

Then Mr. Pickering dispatched another—a primmer, more insistent herald.

"A-hem!"

Instantly the brown-swathed head turned towards the house—instantly also the untidy, glowing sun topping the bookmaker's wife set beneath the horizon of the wall-top. The next moment Mary had come in by the French window and was tilting up her rounded chin for the deferred evening kiss.

"You're back in good time, old man," said Mary. "Tea'll be ready in a minute." His eyes were fixed balefully upon the parcel she held. Mary cast off the newspaper wrapping and revealed three attractively bound books.

"These are for Jim-kin," she said.

Mr. Pickering registered pained surprise.

"I thought, dear," he said coldly, "we had agreed that, in the circumstances, it would be advisable for us to hold ourselves aloof from—er—contact with——"

"I'll explain everything at tea," said Mary.

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"Shan't be a minute. The kettle's on the boil."

Fifteen minutes later Mr. Pickering, now no longer passionately interested in sardines, stretched out a hand for a dewy radish and said: "About the woman next door?"

"Oh, yes. Well, I had just put Jim-kin to bed and was in the garden looking to see if the cats had scratched up all our wee crocus bulbs, when Mrs. Levenstein called to me over the wall."

"Pushing," said Mr. Pickering bitterly; "vulgar—rude—cheek."

Mary shook her brown head. She was a warm-coloured, plump little woman, rather like a jolly bullfinch.

"No," she said softly; "it was just kindness. You see, she had seen the doctor call here yesterday and was anxious to know if Jim-kin was ill. She said she hoped it was nothing serious. Jim-kin was such a handsome little chap, and always so beautifully dressed. I couldn't have been snubby to her, James—now, could I?"

Mr. Pickering hesitated. If Mrs. Levenstein had not been a bookmaker's wife, and had not had such violently golden hair and so lilac a complexion, he would have been touched by her sympathy and flattered by her praise of Jim-kin (for Jim-kin was supposed to be the living image of his father), but—"You need not have been exactly snubby, Mary," he said judiciously. "A brief but courteous answer, a chill but polite inclination of the head, followed by an unhurried but definite retreat into the house through the convenient French window would, I think, have met the situation adequately."

"Oh, James!" smiled Mary reprovingly. "What? Not after she's lent me those books for Jim-kin? Why, I simply had to stay for a little chat."

Mr. Pickering sighed. Those books, he saw clearly, constituted the thin end of the social wedge. By means of these books the Levensteins wished to insinuate their way into the block-like respectability of the Pickerings. Mary was too soft-hearted to recognise the danger, but——

"Poor things," added Mary, "they have no children of their own."

Mr. Pickering brushed this aside as though it were not surprising.

"Now, look here, Mary," he began primly.

"And then," went on Mary, her bright, bird-like eyes lighting up vividly, "she, Mrs. Levenstein, told me about Naughty Nancy."

Mr. Pickering stared, bewildered, affronted.

"How dare Mrs. Levenstein strive to—to contaminate——" he was beginning when Mary's excited laugh stopped him.

"Naughty Nancy's a racehorse," she explained. "It won a big race this week. It started at ten to one against it. That means that if I—you—anyone had bet £10 on it, I—you—anyone would have won £100 Oh, James!"

Mr. Pickering gazed at her in horrified amazement. He had to grope for words in which to express himself.

"A—a—racehorse!" he gasped. "But—but surely, Mary, you are not—not suggesting for one moment that we should actually——" His voice sank into a stupefied whisper and then ceased; it could not frame the word "bet." The silent deeps of outraged rectitude closed over the awful word and smothered it.

Mary lowered her eyes; there may have been a twinkle in them.

"Mrs. Levenstein only just mentioned it, just for fun, in passing, as it were," she explained hurriedly. "Why, James, you didn't think that I really meant——"

"I hoped not," said Mr. Pickering icily.

Mary pushed back her chair. Then she went to her husband and kissed the very wide parting on his sandy head.

"But," she persisted softly, the more persistently because so softly, "supposing—only supposing—we *had* backed Naughty Nancy."

He did not move; his scalp struck chill to her lips. She knew that he regarded betting as one of the many roads to ruin besetting the footsteps of frail mankind. But she knew other things as well, so she went bravely on: "If we had backed Naughty Nancy we could have done what the doctor wants——about Jim-kin, couldn't we?"

Mr. Pickering made a violent gesture with half a radish, and Mary laughed and kissed him again.

"I'm only teasing," she said, quite untruthfully. "I know it's utterly impossible to do what the doctor said. Don't think any more about it, darling."

But Mr. Pickering continued, off and on, to think about it, as Mary had intended he should. And when she had gone to bed he lit his pipe (he had two pipes a day—more than two constituted another road to ruin) and thought quite definitely about it. Not about horse-racing, of course, or about betting, but about Jim-kin and what the doctor had said, and the impossibility of following out his suggestions. Jim-kin was delicate; Jim-kin had a nasty little cough sometimes; six months away from the fog and—and unsuitable surroundings (The Rhododendrons

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Mr. Pickering gazed at her in horrified amazement. "A—a—racehorse!" he gasped.

was certainly damp; the red wallpaper in the dining-room was inclined to peel) would make all the difference—would give Jim-kin a new grip on—on health. Clean, bracing air and good wholesome food were what Jim-kin needed.

But Mr. Pickering knew and Mary knew that Jim-kin could not have these desirable things, for in the region of domestic finance each month the margin left over between "ends" grew less, and if the cost of living continued to increase there would soon be no margin, and then, a little later, would come the dread day when ends would refuse to meet. Debt! Another road to ruin!

Mr. Pickering got up, unlocked a drawer in the writing-table and withdrew a small account-book wherein, with excessive neatness, he kept the record of household receipts and payments. It did not take him five minutes to find his pessimistic anticipations confirmed—at the end of this month the margin would have dwindled to £10.

And, pat on this discovery, upstairs Jim-kin coughed—his cough awoke him sometimes now—and Mary began to croon a soothing lullaby to him.

"Ten pounds!" cried Mr. Pickering aloud, and started nervously to his feet, spurred by the sudden recollection that £10 was the exact sum mentioned by Mary in connection with the hypothetical investment which Naughty Nancy would have converted into £100.

Agitatedly he began to pace the room. A newspaper lay in his way, the paper in which

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the books for Jim-kin had been wrapped; he stooped to remove it; all his instincts were tidy. He glanced at the printed sheet as he folded it. An advertisement sprang forth, flung itself at him; he did not so much consciously read as absorb it:

DO IT NOW!
Charley (Chummy) Chick,
THE TIP-TOP TIPSTER,
who sent NAUGHTY NANCY to all clients,
has got another red-hot, fear-nothing Snorter for the
UNIVERSAL HANDICAP.
Can't be Beat. The Chance of the Season. A Shirt-on Winner!
CHARLEY (CHUMMY) CHICK is a Gentleman, and he gives a Gentleman's Word that his Fancy for the Universal is a Certainty.
Send 10s. Postal Order to——, &c.

Mr. Pickering cast the paper aside fiercely, and then even more fiercely, because exasperated by his own weakness, picked it up again. Charley (Chummy) Chick's advertisement once again leapt out at him and, as it were, slapped him on the shoulder in the cheeriest, most friendly way.

Now, Mr. Pickering's punctiiious, old-maidish habits, and his morbid shrinking from the light-hearted pleasures and relaxations of his fellow-clerks had set him apart from all business friendships or even companionship. His life away from The Rhododendrons was a lonely one; at the office he was looked upon as a prig and shunned accordingly. Therefore Charley (Chummy) Chick's breezy familiarity strongly appealed, by its very contrast, to the correct aloofness in him; just as Charley's choice of strange adjectives—red-hot, fear-nothing, shirt-on—intrigued, while startling, his always stilted and generally banal mode of expressing himself. But there was more than this. There was Charley's stimulating confidence in himself, and, perhaps most impressive of all, his simple, frank statement that he was a gentleman. Mr. Pickering was so conservative that he still had faith in the all-round efficacy of this old-fashioned word.

"Ten shillings isn't much," muttered Mr. Pickering.

Beads of sweat started on his forehead. His breathing quickened. The paper shook in his hands. Should he? Should he send 10s. to Charley (Chummy) Chick? It wouldn't bind him to anything. He had a ten-shilling note in his pocket-book and a twopenny stamp. And, after all, it wasn't so much he who was going to do it as Jim-kin. He was simply Jim-kin's agent. And—and nobody'd know. He glanced again at the advertisement. "Do It Now!" bellowed Charley jovially. Mr. Pickering sat down at the writing-table. From the room above came the muffled sound of Jim-kin's cough. Mr. Pickering gripped his pen. An upstair door opened.

"James, dear, aren't you coming up?" called Mary.

An intensely cunning look crept into Mr. Pickering's eyes.

"In a minute. I—I'm just glancing at the political news in the paper." It was indicative of Mr. Pickering's peculiar mental and emotional condition that he did not hesitate to deceive Mary. He even smirked at Charley when he did so—a sportsman's smirk to a brother sportsman. Then he wrote the letter and put it in his pocket. Then he went upstairs, and as he threw off his jacket in the bedroom he laughed suddenly—a queer, reckless little laugh. But it did not awaken either Jim-kin or Mary. Jim-kin, exhausted, was sound asleep, and Mary was wideawake—with her eyes shut. Mary was smiling in her sleep.

II.

Mr. Pickering craned his neck out of the bathroom window and gazed earnestly down upon the adjoining strip of garden, wherein, in a wicker-chair and with a pink newspaper over his head, Mr. Levenstein, the bookmaker, slept profoundly. "Dear me," muttered Mr. Pickering agitatedly, "this is excessively disheartening. How am I going to communicate with him without appearing to desire to do so."

Within Mr. Pickering's coat pocket lay the letter received from Charley, whose red-hot snorter for the Universal Handicap had proved to be a horse called Right-O, by Prime Minister out of All's Well. And it was Mr. Pickering's feverish desire to back Right-O with the man Levenstein before the return of Mary and Jim-kin from their afternoon walk. Ten £1 Treasury notes—representing the Pickerings' margin of domestic safety—rustled and writhed in Mr. Pickering's trouser-pocket, destined for this investment. And Levenstein slept! With the future health of Jim-kin tottering in the balance Levenstein slept!

It would, of course, have been easy for Mr. Pickering to have aroused the bookmaker by shouting "Hi!" or perhaps "Hey!" at him; but he hesitated to do either, because his particular desire was to impart an air of casualness to the transaction, and not in any

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way to supply Levenstein with a neighbourly thin end of the wedge. It would be terrible if Right-O brought the Pickerings and Levensteins together, and yet Right-O must be backed immediately. Mary and Jim-kin might return any minute.

Jim-kin's rubber ball, a large tartan-clad affair, solitary on the worn grass plot, caught Mr. Pickering's eye and provided him with inspiration. It was for Jim-kin's sake that a habit of a lifetime was about to be broken; it was only just therefore that Jim-kin's ball should act as go-between.

A minute later Mr. Pickering was out in the garden playing ball with himself with every outward sign of keen enthusiasm. "One—two—three!" he squeaked breathlessly—for he was not in training—gambolling grotesquely, and making colt-like skips as he tossed the bauble aloft and strove to catch it as it descended. "Four—five—six—seven!" and at "seven" the ball, describing a graceful arc, sailed over the dividing wall and vanished from Mr. Pickering's view. Almost simultaneously from the bookmaker's garden there crashed forth thunderously a word of one syllable—not a nice word—followed without loss of time by the appearance of the bookmaker's red, enraged, and plebeian face on the wall-top.

"Look 'ere," demanded Mr. Levenstein, fiercely querulous, "'oo d'you think you're throwin' things at, eh? 'Aven't you 'eard the war's over? Then what d'you mean by bombin' me? 'It me on the blinkin' 'ead, you did, and me sleepin' like a innercent child!"

"I—I'm extremely sorry," faltered Mr. Pickering; "it was the sheerest accident. I—I was merely taking a little gentle exercise, so—so as to keep—er—fit. Pray accept my regrets."

Mr. Levenstein and his family of chins nodded affably.

"That's orl right," he said. "No offence taken or meant. Give and take's my motter—it's me business, too—odds, you know; I'm a bookmaker. 'Ere's your ball. Are you going to play with it again? I'd like to watch you."

Mr. Pickering gravely accepted the return of Jim-kin's plaything.

"No," he said; "I have finished my allotted exercise for the day." He turned as though to leave, hesitated, and then said over his shoulder: "By the way, speaking of—er—odds, it has just occurred to me—I don't know how it got into my head but——" Casting a hurried, furtive glance at the house-windows, he sidled close to the wall and, thrusting his hand into his pocket, brought out the Treasury notes in his hot, clenched fist.

"Here—quick!" he whispered hoarsely; "ten pounds on Right-O for the Universal Handicap. Just—just for fun, you know."

Mr. Levenstein grinned. "Right-O—eh? Orl right, mister. Ten to one's the price. You're on."

Mr. Pickering quivered. It was done! He'd made a bet! Ten to one! One hundred to ten! If—or, rather, when—Right-O won he would receive £100 and his stake of £10 back!

"It—it's a shirt-on winner," he stammered; "a—a red-hot snorter!"

"Well, well," said Mr. Levenstein noncommittally.

"You—you won't mention it to anyone? You'll keep it a secret?"

Mr. Levenstein winked familiarly, and Mr. Pickering instantly shrank back into his respectable shell.

"Good afternoon," he said coldly, and hurried back into the house. Mary opened the French window to him; her bird-like, inquiring eyes were fixed upon Jim-kin's rubber ball. Mr. Pickering forced his brows into a frown.

"This was left out on the lawn," he said austerely. "I—er—have just brought it in. You know how I hate untidiness."

"Yes, dear," said Mary.

III.

"Good morning, sir," said the bookstall clerk brightly.

"Oh—er—good morning," said Mr. Pickering nervously.

"The usual, sir?" insinuated the clerk, more brightly still. (This was the fourth day Mr. Pickering had bought every paper in sight. A promising customer!)

"Yes—er—yes—the usual."

With incredible swiftness a dozen papers were reaped from the stall and safely garnered within Mr. Pickering's arms.

"That'll be two-and-two," said the bookstall clerk beaming. Mr. Pickering paid, and with his literary harvest entered a third class carriage of the 8.15 to town. It was the morning of the great race; at 3.30 the Universal Handicap was to be run.

Huddled up in a corner of the carriage, feeling exquisitely guilty, Mr. Pickering for the fourth day in succession summoned the prophets to prophesy unto him. They responded from the Sporting Intelligence columns of the daily press. Thus spoke the first:

"RIGHT-O certainly has a chance, and if the going is soft he ought to be there or thereabouts."

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A slight flush mantled Mr. Pickering's cheeks. It was raining. Surely the going would be soft? He flung down the paper and snatched another from the bundle on his knees.

"I don't care about RIGHT-O, but if the going is hard he may show up fairly prominently."

Mr. Pickering crumpled up the sheet and again glanced out of the carriage window. It looked like clearing. Perhaps the ground would be hard after all. He seized another paper.

"If RIGHT-O is in the mood I should not seek further for the winner of the Universal; but he is such an uncertain brute."

With a gasp of indignation Mr. Pickering cast the rude prophet aside and agitatedly unfolded another paper.

"There is one thing in RIGHT-O'S favour—he is entirely reliable, and his temper is of the sweetest."

Mr. Pickering sighed gusty relief and caught up the fifth paper from his sheaf.

"Barring accidents, RIGHT-O must win."

Ah! That was the talk! Mr. Pickering beamed, and with a confident smile consulted his sixth prophet.

"The result is of course doubtful, but I can assure my readers here and now that RIGHT-O has not an earthly . . ."

"Good Heavens!" groaned Mr. Pickering. The train was running into the station; he had time for only one more prophet.

"I do not claim any occult gifts nor am I infallible, but I have a curious feeling that the winner of the Universal will be found amongst the following . . ."

And the prophet proceeded to enumerate thirteen out of the fifteen probable starters for the great event.

Mr. Pickering left the carriage a prey to the most disturbing doubts. What a harassing, what an ageing business this being a secret gambler was—yet how enthralling withal!

Ever since those precious Treasury notes had gone over the garden wall into the keeping of the man Levenstein, Mr. Pickering had not ceased to think of Right-O. So much depended upon Right-O—future solvency, Jim-kin's health, everything! The world—the Pickering world—revolved around Right-O! And yet—and this is what aged Mr. Pickering—only during his brief journeys to and from town and for half-an-hour at lunch (coffee, scone, and dominoes) could he permit Right-O to have free play with his thoughts. Most of the time at home and all the time at the office he must appear as one who knew not Right-O. At the office this affectation of indifference was not so difficult to sustain; he had his work to do and the sack to receive if he did not do it. But at The Rhododendrons it was harder, much harder. One evening, after Mary had gone to bed, Mr. Pickering, faltering for a moment in his allegiance to the gentlemanly Mr. Chick, and acting on a suggestion overheard in the train, had "pricked for the winner." He had spread the evening paper—with the page opened at the Probable Starters and Jockeys—on the table in front of him, and, having shut his eyes, had jabbed a pin at random at the printed sheet. When he opened his eyes he found the pin had selected

WHY HAVE BUNIONS
WHEN WE CAN CURE YOU TO-DAY?

Thereupon he had cut out the portion of the paper containing the real news—thus eliminating the pin's preference for advertisements—and had pricked again. This time he inflicted a painful wound upon his own thumb engaged in steadying the Probable Starters and Jockeys.

Henceforth he had not wavered in his faith in Mr. Chick's Snorter. He had been sufficiently punished for his momentary lapse. Right-O was obviously meant by Fate as well as by Chummy Chick.

Luckily Mary's was not a suspicious nature, otherwise she could not have failed to notice the picturesque sporting expressions, picked up by Mr. Pickering from the prophets, with which he now, quite subconsciously, garnished his speech. But Mary noticed nothing. She just smiled and looked kind. The disgraceful incident of Mrs. Levenstein and Naughty Nancy seemed to have fled from her mind. She didn't even know that the Universal was about to be run. Of course this amazing innocence suited Mr. Pickering, but none the less it exasperated him. It was to him incredible that Mary was not as interested in Right-O as he was. But—wait—wait until Right-O romped home; then—ah! then she would know, and he would for ever be a hero in her eyes, and later—when he was old enough to realise his father's altruistic sacrifice of principle—in Jim-kin's too.

"I—I should like to—to go home."

The chief clerk glanced from the suppliant Mr. Pickering to the office clock, which indicated 4.30, and back again to Mr. Pickering. The chief clerk was astonished. For twenty years Pickering had been the first to arrive at and the last to leave the office.

"I—I am far from well," urged Mr. Pickering huskily.

"Certainly, certainly," said the chief clerk, recovering a little. "Go home by all means.

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You look pale. I hope you will be better to-morrow."

Mr. Pickering produced a ghastly smile. Better to-morrow? He'd be all right in ten minutes, or all wrong for the rest of his life. From outside the faint sound of a newsboy's cry had been wafted up to him. The result of the Universal was out!

"Thank you," he stammered, and staggered from the office and out into the street. Fate came running to him.

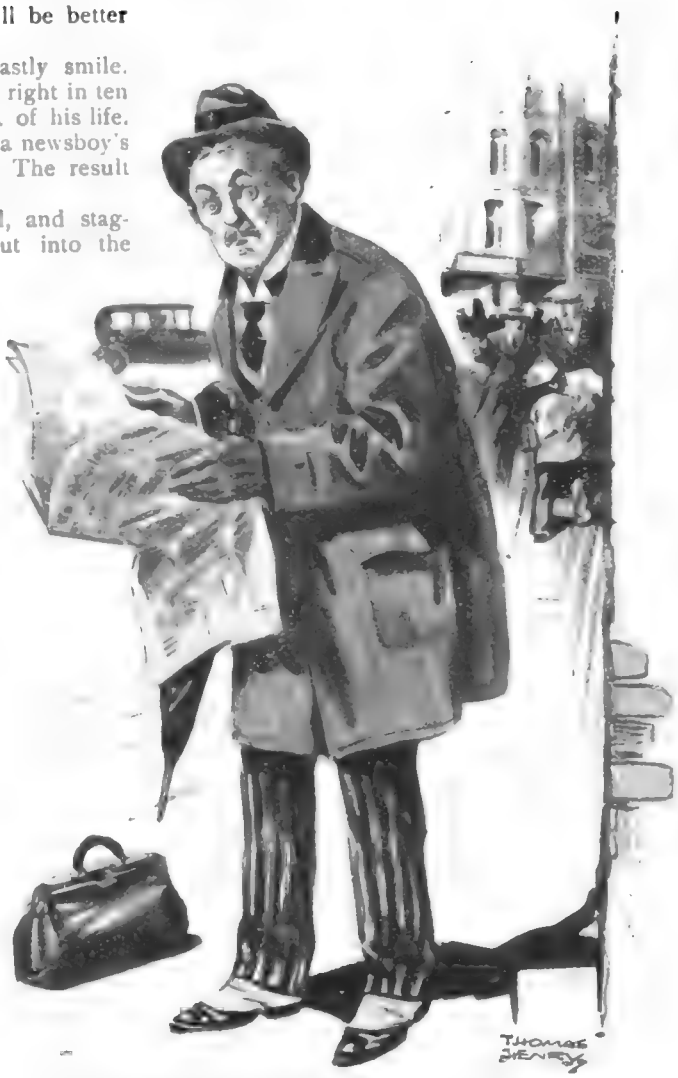
"Winner! winner!" yelled a passing urchin.

"Here!" squeaked Mr. Pickering and, snatching a paper, reeled away. For a minute or two he dared not open it. Not that he feared the result, but—but, supposing Right-O had not won! Mr. Pickering forced a hysterical "ha, ha!" at the ridiculous supposition. Of course Right-O had won. Right-O was a certainty. He tore open the paper, seeking feverishly the Stop Press News. Ah, here it was!

HAPPY EVENT AT THE ZOO

THE GNU GIVES BIRTH TO TWO LITTLE GNUS.

With a strangled cry Mr. Pickering wrenched his starting eyes from this maddening intelligence—it was the latest big news, not the latest little gnus, in which he was interested — and sought elsewhere for his Fate. The next instant he found it.



With a strangled cry Mr. Pickering . . . sought elsewhere for his fate. The next instant he found it.

Result.—UNIVERSAL HANDICAP.

STRONG MAN	1
WELL-I-NEVER	2
QUEEN OF THE EARTH	3

Won by three lengths; neck between second and third. Right-O was left at the post. Prices: 33-1, 5-1, 15-2.

Mr. Pickering, his face a frozen mask of horror, folded the paper with meticulous care and put it in his pocket. He had lost. He was a ruined gamester. Right-O had proved a Wrong-O, and Mr. Charley (Chummy) Chick was not a gentleman. He shivered—shivered as one who has put his shirt on a loser; then, walking as a somnambulist walks, he made his way to the station. He dared not think of the future; at present his mind clung tenaciously to but one clear thought—Mary must never know.

Once again there were sardines and radishes for tea, but this evening both the conciliatory smoothness of the one and the stimulating crispness of the other revolted rather than attracted Mr. Pickering. He had no appetite; he had lost it and the £10 margin of domestic safety.

"You—you don't seem hungry, dear?" said Mary.

Mr. Pickering, starting from a morbid reverie, plunged a fork at a venture into the

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sardine-tin and brought forth a sheaf of oleaginous fish impaled thereon.

"On the contrary," he assured her nervously, "I—I am ravenous."

Did she guess? Why was she watching him so intently? Whenever he cast a furtive glance at her she seemed to be watching, watching.

"You don't appear to be making much of a meal yourself," he blurted, avoiding her eye.

Instantly she was in a flurry. "I? Oh, yes!—I'm getting on splendidly." Twice, thrice Mr. Pickering essayed to convey a sardine from his plate to his mouth. Simply he could not eat. There was a lump in his throat effectually barring ingress. He put down his knife and fork and looked at Mary. She was not "getting on splendidly." She was not eating any more than he was. She caught his glance; her lip trembled.

"James," she began, her voice wavering.

He made a silencing gesture with his fork. Ah, she *did* know, then!

"Stop!" he cried. At least he must glean the fragment of satisfaction of confessing; she must not accuse him. "Mary," he began.

Her eyes were wide with wonder. "But, James," she entreated "I——" Her voice was drowned in the clump-clump of heavy steps in the passage outside; they ceased only with the flinging open of the door.

"Aha!" cried Mr. Levenstein uproariously.

Mr. Pickering fell back in his chair, the fork dropping from his limp hand. This grinning monstrosity in the doorway was not really Levenstein; it was Nemesis, come to gloat over his ruin, fiendishly forestalling his confession, malevolently disregarding the compact of secrecy. Mr. Pickering shut his eyes, and when he opened them Nemesis was thrusting a fat bundle of crinkly notes into Mary's shaking hands.

"There you are," he was saying in the friendliest way, "there's a 'undred and seventy quid there. I've 'ad a good day, so I don't grudge 'em. Just count 'em, will you? A 'undred and sixty-five is your winnings—33 to 1 about a fiver—and your £5 stake back."

He turned to the stupefied Mr. Pickering.

"If ever you feel like backing a 'orse, mister," he said solemnly, "just ask your wife what to back. She knows."

Mr. Pickering with a stupendous effort achieved a shocked expression.

"I—I don't approve of—of betting," he stammered.

Mr. Levenstein's nod was as good as a wink.

"Some doesn't, I know," he said gravely. "Well, good night all."

But at the door he paused. "Where'd you get your tip from?" he asked Mary in a husky whisper.

Mary looked up from her bundle of notes. She was crying happily—a veritable April shower.

"From—from Jim-kin," she sobbed. "I—I wanted him so much to be one."

"Be one?" echoed Messrs. Pickering and Levenstein in amazed unison.

The shower was over. The sun broke out.

"A 'Strong Man,'" explained Mary, all-glowing.

WEALTH.

The baby at the Manor takes its airin's in a pram,
Wiv a 'ood wot shuts an' opens, an' the wheels all tyred wiv rubber;
But its nurse 'ull shake 'er 'ead an' say as it's a puny lamb—
Yer dursen't even peek at it in case yer makes it blubber.

Perce only 'as a soap box wot 'is farver put on wheels;
Yer'd think as it 'ud break 'is bones a-rattlin' on the cobbles;
But 'e's that red an' 'earty—never whimpers, never squeals,
An' when yer runs an' jogs 'im up 'e jes' sits toight—an' wobbles!

The baby at the Manor 'as a fortune to its name;
Oi guess our Perce 'ull goo to work as soon as 'e's in breeches,
An' loikely 'e'll be alwez poor an' workin', jes' the same—
But the baby at the Manor knows as money isn't riches!

Almey St. John Adcock.

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Plain Letters to a Pretty Girl.

By a Bad Man.

Illustrated by A. K. Macdonald.

In this, his third letter, the bad man discourseth on the subject of his own kind—that is, men. He warns Eve concerning her relations with them, revealing curious and subtle things. She will not believe a word of it, yet, nevertheless, his sayings are full of wisdom.

MEN, Eve, darling, whether you like it or not—but the probability is that you will—men are your world. Through men will come your triumphs and your humiliations, your conquests, your crashes, and your children, if you have any. You will be known by the male company you keep, and on your relations with men will depend even your relations with women.

The simplest way to classify men is to divide them into two camps—those who are in love with you and those who are not. Of these, the second half will be the more difficult to handle, for it has been written by a wise scribe, "A lover has strong arms but no brains," and that is as true as anything else. I don't mean that only men without brains fall in love, nor that men with brains never fall in love. I mean that if a man is in love, his brains, so far as the woman is concerned, are in abeyance. He ceases to listen to them; he merely acts as his emotions, or his heart, if you prefer it, prompt him.

Therefore, if a man is in love with you, sway his emotions—a simple thing to do—and ignore his brains. A woman has nothing to do with a man's brains beyond enjoying what these earn for him. Her relations with him, if she is clever, are purely emotional; and if she is not clever she won't have any kind of relations with him for very long. But women *are* insufferably clever, as a rule, where men are concerned.

There was a period, Eve, during the reign of Victoria the Good, of whose time there are still many survivors, when a young girl was taught by her female elders that man was woman's worst enemy. Their reasons for this statement it isn't necessary to set out in detail, but, briefly, men were said to rage up and down the earth with the instincts of wild animals (Victorian ladies enjoyed but the slightest knowledge of natural history), seeking to take all and give nothing.

Poor woman's only chance, said the Victorian ladies, was to marry some man—any man would do—when all his actions towards her would be sanctified, so that nothing mattered, and he would arrange to keep off all the other men.

To-day a girl finds that men are her best friends. The result has come about through a certain candour on the part of the modern girl which a Victorian maiden lacked. The modern girl's attitude towards man seems to be: "I know all about you, and if you'll be decent to me I'll be decent to you." In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the system works admirably. There will always be a hundredth case until the Millennium arrives, and then we shall all be very dull.

There are still certain women, Eve, dear—gaunt, ungenerous, stringy, uncomfortable creatures—who will tell you that you can never afford to be sincere with men. Actually, you can never afford to be anything else. Uncommon wariness invites disaster,

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for if a girl is ever wary, it seems a pity to give her nothing to be wary about. If you're perfectly sincere you're perfectly safe, because in playing the game of life with women the nicest men always bat left-handed. Whenever you win, you may be quite sure some nice man has pitied your smallness (*sic*) and let you.

You ought to realise that, although men aren't always right about women, yet in the nature of things they're less likely to be wrong about women than women are to be wrong about men. There's a reason for this; there's always a reason for everything, little as people appear to think so.

You see, even to-day, with a latchkey in every girl's hand, and votes and seats on juries for women, men are able to get a better first-hand knowledge of women than girls of your class can get of men. ("Mystery," Eve, is a monopoly of the sheltered classes. The unsheltered classes know everything.) Men of your class learn women from women not of your class. They've even been known to turn to these with relief in order to be their poor, tired, natural selves for a moment.

You and your sort, Eve, are handicapped by artificial class-restraint from knowing men as they are. Your men are hardly ever perfectly natural and frank with you, because they know you wouldn't like it if they were. That's the way you keep "sheltered," and if you think it's worth it—why, I s'pose it is, if you think it is.

These are all difficulties in the way of your relations with men, the only solutions of which are sincerity and sympathy, for the more sincere and sympathetic you are the more natural men will be in your company, the fewer barriers of artificial restraint will rise between you and them.

A girl *always* sets the pace, the standard, and the tone where men are concerned. In the early days of your friendship with every new man you must do what airmen call "gain height."

Men are sentimental creatures of ideals who love to feel a girl is away up above them in the more spiritual matters of life.

Very young men may be almost a

Very young men sometimes place a girl on so very high a pedestal that the air becomes too rarefied for her to breathe.

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No woman would dream of wearing her usual kit if she were going to see a man about a job.
[Page 490, col. 1.]

nuisance in this respect; sometimes they place a girl on so very high a pedestal that the air becomes too rarefied for her to breathe. But even this is better than the conduct of the few and bumptious, who have a habit of condescending to a woman because she isn't a man. These should be slain instantly.

Yet on the whole, Eve, dear, in spite of the Victorian ladies who speak unceasingly out of their boundless inexperience, you're going to be very safe with men, for one thing because their standard with women is, on the whole, higher than that of women with men. Don't, for heaven's sake, misunderstand me. As regards what are called morals, men are certainly no better than women; probably they're worse. But few men could be as cruel to a woman as many women are to men. There's no secret stab, no refinement of cunning cruelty—I almost said no dirty trick—a woman won't inflict on a man she hates, especially if at one time she loved him.

A man may go right up in the air, smash things, curse and swear, and call you names he never ought to call you, storm out of the house, and never speak to you again, in given circumstances. But he won't slander you or make mischief, or pollute your reputation in sly, underhand ways; and these things a woman will do for a man if she hates him enough. That's the difference between women and men.

You, Eve, are very young. You're out in the world for the first time doing what Longfellow, poor old gentleman, called:

> "Standing with reluctant feet
> Where the brook and river meet—
> Womanhood and childhood fleet."

As a matter of fact, no female human is ever a child in the same sense as the male. I've had little girls of three or four talk quite gravely to me, with all the social charm and tact of their mammas, whereas a little boy would have been eating or imitating an engine. But, as I said, you're nevertheless very young.

Therefore you must beware of letting yourself get very fond of any man. I know these things are largely out of control, yet pray be on your guard. Your very age is against you, for youth is a generous and giving season. Youth always feels itself so rich and time so inexhaustible. When we're young there are no obstacles, for we have infinite strength to crush them or infinite time in which to circumvent them. For the young there are no limits, and when we begin to realise our limitations it is far more symbolic of age than the first wrinkle or the first grey hair.

A grey hair may be dyed or extracted, a wrinkle may be massaged out of existence, but what shall expunge a limitation once realised?

If you become fond of a man, Eve, you imprison your soul, you see life through him, not as it is, you add his limitations to your own, and they may be narrower than yours. Moreover, at present you're green, immature, inexperienced. The man you choose in your late teens may be very different from the one you would pick in your early twenties; if you marry quite young you may live to repent.

Still, if the worst comes to the worst, and you fall in love, you'd better decide calmly: (1) How much he is worth to you. (2) How much you're prepared to pay. (3) How far you're prepared to let the affair lead you—that is, to the point of marriage or not.

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(4) How much you're prepared to let the man suffer. I put him last, but even men have feelings.

Now shall I tell you something?

In the long run, given a fair average of decency and money, it doesn't much matter to a woman what man she marries. It matters very much to a man what woman he marries. To a woman the marriage is more important than the man; to a man the woman is more important than the marriage.

Discussing this saying with your girl friends over tea and cigarettes, you may disagree with me, so I'd better explain.

Girls, with few exceptions, are more logical, emotionally, than men, and their state of loving is more lasting because they have fewer illusions. Apart from the man, marriage opens to a girl a whole constructive policy, dealing with home, servants, children. I don't labour the domestic point; girls seem to become less and less domestic, but probably the man has had his home and servants already; to a girl these are new toys.

To a girl marriage means the man and a number of things. To a man marriage means the girl. Am I clear?

Men are more sentimental than women. The imaginative suffer acutely; the British Gent type—the "topping." "ripping" type—gets off lightly. You can't generalise about men, and you must judge by the particular man in question. That's why I ask you to decide calmly how much you're prepared to let him suffer.

An important fact for a young girl to remember is that men never use sex as a weapon, whereas women always do. You can't imagine a man buying new clothes and a new hat before going to see some woman about a job, but no woman would dream of wearing her usual kit if she were going to see a man about a job. She would spend hours and money on her appearance first.

Now, after a point, appearance has nothing whatever to do with brains or efficiency. A man seeking a job knows he will be judged on his merits. A woman knows, if a man is to engage her, that she can use sex as a weapon—so she does.

So when you sum up a man's behaviour you mustn't allow for that strategic use of sex which you'd take for granted in a woman, because that will lead you into error, and we are taught to seek truth and ensue it.

It has been laid down that a woman never means what she says, though I doubt the truth of this assertion. Men generally mean what they say when they say it, however extravagant it might sound in cold blood, but a man sitting on a stile in the moonlight with a girl and a man in his office the next day are different beings. Still, even at that there's generally a residue of truth in his over-night ramblings, whereas a woman will say any darned thing on occasions in order to create an effect. In this respect also you mustn't judge men altogether by yourself, my Eve.

You will always tend to exaggerate your feelings if you believe yourself to be in love, unless you really are passionately fond of someone, and then exaggeration is hardly possible. But few women do fall deeply in love, or men either. More men do than women, because more men than women are intelligent and idealistic, and to a greater extent.

The first and last thing to remember about men is that the greatest thing in a man's life is his work. He may turn from his work to you for a time and seem to forget it, but he will always go back to it. Into his work you will hardly come at all, nor will any other woman.

But behind a man and his work is always some woman. The thing is, if you want a particular man, to be that woman. You may be the most wonderful girl in existence, Eve, and achieve more than any other woman of your generation, but there's always some man who'll achieve more, and if you're the woman behind him and his work you'll attain to far more greatness than ever you could compass by yourself.

Putting aside claptrap for a moment, a girl still fulfils herself most perfectly through a man, not on her own. With this great thought I will take my leave, and remain,

Yours most faithfully,

THE SINNER.

(Next Month the Bad Man gives Eve some practical advice on choosing a career.)

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The Copper Clock.

By William Le Queux.

Illustrated by A. Gilbert.

It was a bright, frosty day in early spring. The snow had melted, and in South Russia the trees were budding. Nature had awakened after the long, drear winter of black frosts and constant snows.

In a heavy travelling-coat I stood upon the steps of the Prosper Hotel in Kharkov and looked up and down the wide, inartistic street.

After a long journey from London, I had arrived that morning, and as Monsieur Jules Dupont, electrical engineer, of Lyons—as my passport stated me to be—had taken up my quarters at the hotel in question. I had travelled as quickly as I could, first by the Orient express from Ostend through to Bucharest, and thence by way of Jassy and Elizabethgrad to Kharkov, in the centre of the great plain of Little Russia.

There was much unrest in the city. The waiter told me that on the night previously some students had come into collision with some revolutionaries, and the Red troops had shot the people down, there being over fifty dead and two hundred wounded.

I looked along the grey street where the demonstration had taken place. There were some marks of blood still upon the pavement, but that was all. It was practically deserted. Kharkov is the home of the "Old Believers," the sect which dissented under Alexis from a version of the liturgy proposed by Nikon, who, notwithstanding all the war and tumult and the post-war wave of Bolshevism, held tenaciously to their distinctive religious tenets and to their highly religious customs.

I strolled along the wide street far beyond the town. The road first led through endless pines, and then to the river's edge, where flocks of black sheep were nibbling the meadows. Crows were flying in crowds; two green roofs, a bell-tower, several sprawling windmills, and a half-broken arch completed the picture.

From a small house I passed came the soft tinkle of a *balalaika*. A tall *mujik*, over six feet, with a winning, boyish face, was twanging the instrument, while a woman in the cottage was drinking tea with the usual slice of sour rye bread.

The road I had taken ran out for many miles across a plain, closely following the muddy river, where a sedate barge was plodding upstream. The barge-men, bearded and generously built, wore the familiar scarlet shirt and boots almost to the thighs, while through a small window-pane in the stern a woman's face stared at me, half-hidden by straggly geraniums and a white curtain.

I had penetrated again into one of the strongholds of the Bolsheviks.

As Jules Dupont, engineer of the celebrated firm of Messieurs Courtin and Le Grain, of Lyons, I was there ostensibly in order to inspect some property where the firm had an idea of putting up a branch manufacturing concern for Russia.

The application to travel to Kharkov and to move freely had been granted by the Soviet Government, hence my arrival there. I had come to a long row of buildings at the end of which stood a substantial, stone-built house, the residence of General Maximoff, the Governor of Kharkov, who had been arrested, taken to Moscow, and executed by the Bolsheviks about six months previously.

As I approached the place a burly corporal of the Red Guards appeared from nowhere and gruffly demanded to see my papers. He noticed that I was a foreigner, and, though he appeared to be an uncouth fellow, he nevertheless spoke broken French.

I laughed, and at once produced my passport, and my certificate of identity bearing the official seal of the Soviet Government.

"Why are you here?" he inquired.

"I have come to inspect these buildings,"

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I said. "My firm are contemplating putting up an engineering factory in Kharkov. We have been invited to do so by the Government of Moscow."

"But Comrade Liventzoff is living here."

"Oh!" I replied. "Who is he?"

"He came from Moscow three months ago—a Deputy from the Soviet. And they gave him the late Governor's palace to live in."

This information surprised me. I saw that if such were the truth, then my story of buying the palace and property to turn it into a factory would not hold water. Supposing this Red Guard informed Comrade Liventzoff? He would inquire of the Government in Moscow, and my fiction would be at once discovered.

I was about to beat a hasty retreat, when, of a sudden, I resolved upon a bold plan.

I took the soldier into my confidence, telling him that the Soviet Government were trying to attract foreign manufacturers to set up plant in Russia, and that I had come there privately at the express invitation of Monsieur Petroff, who was Lenin's representative in Paris, to make a preliminary investigation.

"You see that my credentials are good," I added. "But I don't want any publicity. The object of my firm is to establish a great works which will give employment to several thousand workers in Kharkov, and be beneficial to the people—not to the capitalists."

Then, after some further parrot-talk of Bolshevism, in which it has been my duty to be well versed, I saw that I had won him over to secrecy. Indeed, he promised to meet me that night.

When I left him I realised that the stroke I had made was a bold one. One slip, and I should be again in the hands of the enemy.

It was owing to certain information given me by Myrtle Merriman (a beautiful girl with whom I was deeply in love), when I had consulted her regarding a person whom we suspected, that I had ventured again into Soviet Russia. Myrtle, during her residence in Moscow, had met many people who were now prominent in the Red *régime*, and about one of these, one afternoon at her home in Cheshire, she had told me many interesting facts.

These I had, in due course, reported to the Chief at Downing Street, and he had sent me upon this mission, which I knew to be dangerous.

Back again at the hotel—a rather poor place, but greatly overheated, with its high brick stoves and dirty, bare floors—I ate my lunch and then went out to see the great Kereshenkaia Fair. The ground on the northern outskirts of the city was crowded. The fair lasts three weeks, and buyers from every quarter of Russia, and from the Crimea and Roumania, flock there to purchase manufactured goods, leather of all kinds, sheepskins, and wool. A pandemonium of tongues reigned there, and costumes of every sort and kind were to be seen.

Glad to escape the crowd and rabble, I walked along the Catherine Prospekt and strolled through the great Bazaar, which was also thronged with traders. I knew that I was being watched by police agents, so, posing as a sight-seer, I purchased several bits of Tula work—silver upon which there is traced beautiful arabesques and scenes in black. I bought a cigarette-case, a cigar-box, and some other trifles, though I really did not want them.

Everywhere there were on sale horse-hides, leather shoes, and the heavy *shubas*, those sheepskin coats worn by the *mujiks*.

The fact that the Secret Police had picked me up as a stranger worried me. As I had promised the soldier—whose name was Ivan Savadski—to meet him that night, I knew that I should be compelled to exercise all my wits to avoid being spied upon.

I thought it all out. In my room at the hotel I left my suit cases unlocked. In them were a number of papers and reports belonging to the firm of Messieurs Courtin Le Grain et Cie, of Lyons, and I left them on purpose that they should be inspected.

I ate my dinner alone in the corner of the big, bare room, where a number of men and women—merchants from afar—were busy eating and chattering. Then I resorted to a ruse. After telling the hall-porter that I expected an urgent telegram, and if one came he was to send it to my room on the first floor, as I was feeling unwell after my long journey, I ascended the stairs.

Within the room I changed my clothes, and opening one of the two windows, the one which looked out upon the back of the house, I crept out until I hung upon the window-sill with my hands and managed to drop upon a pile of half-melted snow.

Thence I crept in the shadows by a devious route which I had already explored in the daytime, and five minutes later was on my way out of the town in the direction which the Red Guard, Ivan, would come from the Governor's palace.

The police would, I knew, be watching the hotel doorway, expecting me to go forth. Then they would inquire of the porter, who would inform them of my indisposition.

I had only walked for about ten minutes

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when I came face to face with my friend the Bolshevik soldier. We met in the darkness, and turned down a narrow street.

To him I represented myself as an emissary of the French Extremists, the group who had joined forces with Lenin and Trotsky. He, a simple corporal, was flattered at being thus brought into the secret confidence of Red Russia's French allies.

"Now," I said, "I am glad that we have met, for we can be of mutual advantage to each other."

"In what way?" he asked, as we strolled along the narrow thoroughfare in the darkness. Before us in the sky shone the red glare of the fair-ground, and from it we could hear the hum of voices and the brazen sounds of gipsy roundabouts, barrel organs, and trumpets constituting the usual din of the fair.

"In a variety of ways," I replied. "First, though I have no desire to disturb Monsieur Liventzoff, or, indeed, to let him know that the Soviet Government are contemplating selling his new home to a French manufacturing firm, I want opportunity to go through the place in his absence. Can you manage it for me?"

Ivan Savadski hesitated.

"Comrade Liventzoff seldom goes out. Neither does Madame his wife," he replied. "I am corporal of the guard placed upon the Governor's palace, but it will be difficult, I fear, for you to view it."

"I am in no great hurry," I explained. "But why has a guard been put over the place? What do they fear?"

"Ah, Monsieur! That I do not know. I have often wondered myself," he replied. "I was in Moscow, where my wife and family live, when one day I was called to the Kremlin, and one of Lenin's secretaries gave me a signed order to come here to Kharkov with fourteen men and guard the Governor's palace closely day and night."

"But why?" I asked.

Secretly I guessed why, but naturally I pretended ignorance. I had my part to play.

"Ah! Monsieur, I do not know. Our new Government does many curious things. Some of its actions we cannot understand. This is one of them."

"And this Monsieur Liventzoff — who is he?"

"In Kharkov nobody knows. He has been in America and in England, and he is one of Lenin's most trusted officials. That is all we know. Why they should give him the Governor's palace to live in and then offer it for sale is beyond my comprehension."

"But other things are equally obscure," I remarked, at once seizing upon his own admission.

We went into a small café together, and there I arranged that we should meet three days later out at the palace, and he would endeavour to do what he could in order to allow me sight of the interior.

We had grown friendly, and possibly he believed me to be a thorough-going Extremist and a friend of Bolshevik Russia.

"A person who could help you more than I could is Anna Chmleff," he told me.

"Who is she?" I asked anxiously.

"Madame Liventzoff's companion. She is her sister-in-law, I believe. She has lately been in London."

I pricked up my ears.

"How do you know?"

"Because a couple of days ago I was walking along the corridor past the dining-room when I heard her exclaim in a shrill voice as the family sat at dinner that she had been delighted with the gay life of London, and that she had danced almost every evening. She mentioned some public dance-hall in Hammersmith, wherever that place is. Do you happen to know it, Monsieur?"

I smiled within myself, but I wondered who this companion of Madame Liventzoff could be. That my mission was a very dangerous one could not be concealed. I had, on a previous occasion when acting in my official capacity, brought disfavour on myself in Soviet Russia, hence I was upon tenterhooks as to the *dénouement* of the adventure upon which I had now embarked.

I was in a quandary. But a few seconds sufficed for me to map out a further plan of campaign. When one is a secret agent one must think quickly and act without hesitation. To fear is to be undone. I know of an instance where a member of the French Secret Service robbed an Austrian of half-a-million francs in order to prove himself an international thief. And exactly a year afterwards he returned the sum to the victim anonymously.

"I want to meet this Mademoiselle Chmleff," I said. "I rely upon you to give me an introduction. Remember I am acting in secret, on behalf of our French group formed to assist your great new nation."

"I will do what I can," was Ivan's reply. "You remain in Kharkov, and I will communicate with you."

We wandered together through the streets of the city animated by the great fair, and it was nearly midnight when we gripped hands in firm friendship and parted.

I felt that my diplomacy had not been in

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vain. I had had to exercise my innate cunning —or, to be polite, I suppose I ought to call it tact.

That I was treading upon very thin ice I knew full well.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, as the red sun was declining upon the patches of melting snow, I strolled out along the dreary road from the great, ugly town, and not far from the palace found my grey-coated friend, Ivan Savadski, awaiting me.

He took me aside behind a small outbuilding, and said:

"Mademoiselle will be passing within a quarter-of-an-hour. Go down the road yonder and salute her. You may then become acquainted."

Ivan was a humorist, and he knew the ways of women.

I did as I was bid, and about a quarter-of-an-hour later, sure enough, there came along a female figure warmly wrapped in a big fur coat, wearing a small fur hat.

As she drew nearer I saw that she was about thirty, quite good-looking and refined. But she was not the original of a photograph which I carried carefully in my wallet, as though it were the portrait of my *fiancée*.

When we met at a junction of the road I lifted my hat politely and inquired in French the best way into the city.

"This road," she replied, speaking in the same language, and pointing to the left-hand one, which she was taking. Quite naturally I asked permission to walk beside her, and she at once granted it.

And so we began to chat. Anna Chmleff was certainly an educated young woman. Ivan had told me she had recently been in London. If so, then she must have been upon some secret Bolshevik mission. What had it been? Was it connected with what was in progress in the Governor's palace?

As we went along I explained that I was a French electrical engineer, who had come to Kharkov to ascertain the possibilities of erecting a big factory.

"Ah! I hope you will be successful in acquiring a suitable site, Monsieur," she said. "It would be a good thing for Kharkov. There is much unemployment here just now. But there—it is the same all over Russia."

"Have you ever been in France?" I asked.

"Yes. Quite recently I was in Paris. It seems unchanged by the war."

"And London?" I inquired.

"Yes. I went over to London. I always love London. It is quite as gay as Paris if one knows one's way about. Do you know London?" she asked in turn.

"Slightly," was my reply. "I sometimes go there on business," I added.

"I am staying at the Governor's palace here with Madame Liventzoff," she explained, and before we parted we began to grow quite friendly.

That friendship I cultivated, as well as that of the soldier Savadski, from whom next day I learnt all the details regarding the manner in which the Governor's palace was guarded.

"It was never guarded before Comrade Liventzoff came here," he added. "Why it should be guarded now I can't think."

"Does Comrade Liventzoff have many visitors?" I asked presently.

"Very seldom. His three friends, Comrades Solski, Gresser, and Varvarine, live in the palace and seldom go out. They do a great deal of writing in the small wing of the building—the side of the house facing Kharkov."

"I know the part of the building you mean. I have an idea if we buy the place to make a considerable addition on that side. For that reason I want to see the interior without anybody knowing," I said.

He looked at me rather strangely I thought.

"That is the portion of the building which nobody must enter," he replied. "I have the most strict orders not to allow a soul to approach it."

"How many sentries are there on duty?"

"Three always."

"Well, they might perhaps look the other way—eh?" I suggested to my friend.

He, however, shook his head.

"I can hold out no hope, M'sieur. It would be as much as my life is worth to connive at your entry there."

"But what are they guarding so closely?" I asked, laughing.

"I cannot tell," was his reply. "It is a mystery to us all."

It was to solve that mystery that I was at Kharkov.

Next day I met Anna Chmleff in the street close to my hotel, and walked a little way with her. I told her that I was compelled to return to Lyons on the morrow, but should be back again very soon.

Then I left Kharkov, and, travelling by the way I had come, I joined the Orient express at Bucharest and duly arrived in London. Within a couple of hours of my return I had a long consultation with the Chief, and afterwards went up to Cheshire to see Myrtle.

Her father welcomed me warmly, but when I begged a favour of him he hesitated. The favour I asked was that he would allow Myrtle to go to Russia, and by reason of her

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As we hastened back to the city the sky behind us suddenly became red. "Look!" I cried as we turned. "The copper clock has done its work well!" [*Page* 498, *col.* 2.]

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intimate knowledge of Russian to assist me in my exploits at Kharkov.

Myrtle came into the room while we were discussing it and at once begged to be allowed to go.

"But there is a distinct danger," declared Mr. Merriman, as he stood with his back to the window of the morning room.

"I know there is, Dad. But surely you don't fear to trust me again in Mr. Heathwaite's hands!"

Thus she persuaded her father to allow her to go, and next day, after some hurried preparations, we went up to London together.

Five days later we were in Bucharest, where Myrtle purchased clothes and shoes less noticeable than English ones. Her passport, which had been prepared by our department, showed her to be a French subject, and her profession that of secretary. So, when entering Russia, she was enabled to pose as my niece who acted as secretary.

In due course we arrived at Kharkov and took up our quarters at the Prosper Hotel, where I was welcomed, it having been rumoured in my absence that I was about to build a big factory and give employment to several thousands of people.

My first object was to meet Anna Chmleff again and to introduce my "niece," which I was enabled to do a few days later. The companion of Madame Liventzoff was most friendly towards her, and on the following morning took her round the town and showed her the sights, while I remained in the hotel, supposed to be working upon my plans.

Next evening when it grew dark I strolled out to the Governor's palace alone, and at a respectable distance watched the wing of the palace, that three-storeyed building upon the corner as one approached from Kharkov.

From where I stood in the darkness, hidden by the shadow of a high wall, I could hear the heavy tramp of a sentry in the courtyard. But there was another sound—a low whirr, almost like the hum of a dynamo, and it seemed to come from that part of the palace in which I was interested.

I noticed that in several windows were bright lights—electric lights they were; hence I supposed it was the lighting plant I could hear running.

How dearly I wished to obtain a peep inside that place! In two windows of the top floor there were lights. It was evidently up there that Comrade Liventzoff, with his three friends from Moscow, were "working with their papers," as the soldier, Ivan, had put it.

I suppose I had been there for ten minutes or so when the gate leading to the courtyard opened and two figures, saluted by the sentry, emerged. As they walked in my direction on the opposite side of the road, I saw they were a man and a woman. In curiosity I followed them at a considerable distance until they entered the lighted streets of the town, when I hurried on and passed them.

The man I saw was Comrade Liventzoff himself, a big, burly, full-bearded man, who wore a rough, heavy coat with sable collar, and his companion a slim, fair-haired woman.

My heart stood still! She was the original of that photograph I carried in my wallet in such a manner that if I were searched the picture would be taken to be that of my *fiancée*.

They walked together to the railway station, where, from the left-luggage office, the woman claimed a trunk, and then took a ticket for Moscow. Liventzoff saw her off and raised his hat politely. But previously to that he had apparently given her some very urgent and emphatic instructions.

Afterwards the mysterious man strode back through the town and out towards the Governor's palace, while I returned to the hotel, where I found Myrtle reading.

An hour later I went forth again and despatched a telegram to my firm at Lyons—a commercial message which, though it looked quite innocent, contained a code, which announced the woman's flight to Moscow.

That fact, indeed, caused me some uneasiness. I recollected how, on my first arrival, I had been watched by the Secret Police, and how, on my *bonâ fides* being established, they had ceased to watch me. Was I now suspected? Had Ivan the soldier been indiscreet and told anybody of my desire to visit that wing of the palace, entry to which was so strictly forbidden?

My next move was to bring Ivan and Myrtle together. She knew Russian, and I hoped that she would learn more from him than I could. While walking with her one evening I met the man, as though accidentally, and we stopped to speak. I introduced Myrtle, and we went into a little café close behind the University.

"Well," I said jocularly, "and how are you all up at the palace?"

"Very well, m'sieur."

"Still guarding that mysterious wing of the building—eh?"

"Yes, m'sieur. Comrade Liventzoff has had several visitors lately."

"Ladies?"

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"No; only one. A lady from Moscow, and she has returned. Mademoiselle Chmleff left yesterday also—for Paris, I think."

"Oh!" I remarked. "And what else?"

"Nothing, m'sieur."

"Comrade Liventzoff and his three friends have no idea that I want to buy their house, I suppose?" I remarked.

"No, m'sieur."

"But I do. I'm ready to make an offer to the Government for it, if only I can see the interior."

Ivan remained silent. I saw that he was quite ready to help me to get into the place, but he was in fear of what might happen if he were discovered.

"Couldn't you put on two friends of yours one night—friends who would take no notice of a stranger?" I suggested. "I will make each of them a handsome present."

"Why could I not go there and talk to the guards, and thus attract their attention while monsieur slips in?" Myrtle suggested to him in Russian in a low whisper.

"Ah! Mademoiselle speaks Russian!" Ivan exclaimed, surprised. "Yes. That would be rather a good plan. I will think it over."

He did so, and after a number of meetings in secret we came to an arrangement. One of the soldiers whom he could trust was on leave and would not return for a week; hence we were compelled to wait.

But the delay did not trouble me, for it gave me an opportunity to make certain plans which I had hesitated to make previously. As each day passed I realised the sterling qualities of Myrtle, the girl whom I so dearly loved. Though she knew our peril should we be discovered, yet she acted with a fearlessness born of a sterling patriotism and love of her own land, for which we both were working by underground channels.

She was, I saw, prepared to sacrifice her liberty — nay, even her life—in order to assist me and serve her country. At the same time, I had made several discoveries which in a measure confirmed my suspicions regarding the mystery men from Moscow—Comrade Liventzoff and his three companions.

I sent two more long commercial telegrams to my firm at Lyons. They concerned the price of land outside Kharkov and the ease with which we could obtain labour. But "land" did not mean what it appeared, and "labour" meant quite another thing.

On the night previous to that arranged for my great exploit, an undersized little man, who presented the appearance of a Hungarian Jew, arrived at the hotel. He gave the name of Moser, and his luggage consisted mostly of a heavy leathern case containing traveller's samples.

Just after two o'clock in the morning the handle of my bedroom-door turned very slowly, as I expected, for I had left the door unlocked, and a second later the stranger stood in my room.

"I've brought it, Mr. Heathwaite," he said, and from beneath his arm he produced a small clock beautifully made of copper, but extremely heavy.

"It isn't going," he laughed. "But you see the key is in it when you wish to wind it up."

"Thanks," I said, carrying the clock across to the wardrobe, in which I placed it. "You've had a quick journey, haven't you?"

"Yes. I got your orders from London a fortnight ago to get it ready, and I started from Paris the instant I had your telegram. What is in progress?"

"Wait, and you will learn." I answered with a laugh. "Have a drink?" and I poured him out some brandy.

Then, in fear of being overheard, he quietly withdrew, and I went to sleep again.

Next night at ten o'clock I put the clock in my big pocket, for I intended it as a present, and then I left the hotel with Myrtle. We walked out upon the dark road for some distance, when she hurried on ahead until she came to the gateway which led into the courtyard of the Governor's palace.

In the wing I wished to explore I could see no lights.

When I got up to the gates, I found one of them open, and in the darkness heard Myrtle's voice talking to the sentries in the shadow.

I slipped in noiselessly and crossed the paved yard to a door over which a faint light gleamed. This, Ivan had told me, led to stairs by which the place could be reached. Swiftly I passed through the door, which was ajar—left open purposely, it seemed—and springing up the stairs, found yet another door at the end of a stone passage, where close by lay a soldier apparently asleep.

Probably it was only pretended, for a key was in the door. So I turned it and at once found myself upon the first floor of the wing. I halted to listen. I could hear the hum of the dynamo making the electric light and the noise of machinery somewhere above me.

The stairs were in darkness, therefore I used my flash lamp to explore the place.

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Most of the rooms were locked, but in one which I was able to enter I found upon a table several small packets of white paper, which by the light of my torch I examined.

They convinced me that my voyage of discovery was not in vain. Indeed, I stood breathless at my find,

Then, on the third floor, the passage being in darkness, I saw a streak of light from beneath a door. I bent and peered through the keyhole. Within, some machinery was in motion, and I saw three men in their shirt-sleeves examining something.

Suddenly one of them turned, and, crossing, opened the door.

I had only just time to draw back into a recess to avoid collision with him, and, he having left the door open, I could see all that was in progress in that room.

I dared not breathe. I could not pass the door and escape, for I feared that I should be noticed by the two men who stood facing me.

I was entrapped.

The moments I remained there seemed hours. I thought of Myrtle and wondered how she was faring. Then a horrible thought crossed my mind that if Ivan entertained the least suspicion of the real motive of my visit he would most certainly betray me!

At last the man who had gone forth returned. In his hand he had a packet of the blank paper I had seen in the room below. Fortunately he did not see me huddled in the dark corner, and on returning to his companions he closed the door.

In an instant I prepared for flight. I crept past the door, along the passage, and down the stairs.

Suddenly I heard footsteps ascending. I switched off my flash lamp, and as my hands touched the wall I felt an open door. Into it I withdrew, for who was entering I knew not.

I had seen enough to satisfy me, and my only object now was to make good my escape. As I stood behind the door of that dark room, of the character and dimensions of which I was in entire ignorance, I could hear heavy breathing as the person, coming up the steep stairs, passed the door. It was the sound of some plethoric person—a woman. She halted close to me, and muttering something in Russian which I could not understand, she retraced her steps and went very carefully down again.

The copper clock in my pocket became abominably heavy, so I turned the key three times, and with my flash light looked round the room. It was a kind of office, with a large writing table set in the window

Upon the table I put the clock, and then I hastened downstairs and out of the place as though Satan pursued me.

I slipped across the courtyard to find the gate still open, and Myrtle still chatting with the guards. They had already received a very handsome present, be it said, and as I passed out she wished them good-night and joined me.

"Well? What has happened?" she asked breathlessly.

"It's all right—just as I expected! They're there. They've got most beautiful machinery," I replied.

"Is it all just as you believed?"

"Yes. It is the secret factory which the Bolsheviks have set up for the printing of forged English bank-notes for circulation in Europe and Asia, in order to increase their own funds, and, at the same time, discredit the British currency. I saw some of them. Here are a few!" and I put into her hand several new English ten-pound notes I had taken from the room in which were the packets of bank-note paper.

"Before the war the bank-note presses in Petrograd were among the finest in the world," I added. "Now they are making perfect imitations of our English notes—but not for much longer," I added grimly.

As we hastened back to the city the sky behind us suddenly became red.

"Look!" I cried as we turned. "The copper clock has done its work well!"

And it certainly had, for the whole palace was a mass of roaring flames. Within that innocent-looking clock had been concealed an incendiary bomb of the most terrible description, a German invention during the war.

Already the thousands of packets of finished spurious bank-notes of ten and twenty pounds, packed ready to be sent to India, China, and Japan, were being consumed, as well as the delicate machinery by which they had been manufactured.

My only fear was that there might be some loss of life. But happily there was none, and three days later, no suspicion being aroused against us, we were able to recross again into Roumania, and so returned home, having at last been instrumental in frustrating a very wily and ingenious plot against Great Britain.

The love-making between Myrtle Merriman and myself will probably not interest the reader. It will be sufficient for me to say that, exactly three months after the Chief had summoned us both to Whitehall and thanked us in the name of the nation for our destruction of the Bolshevik bank-note factory, Myrtle became my wife.

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A DELI-KATE SITUATION.

"That's a very nice coat your wife wears," said one friend to another. "You must be making a lot of money."

"As a matter of fact," answered the other, "she got that coat by accident."

"By accident?"

"Yes. The other night the hall was dark when I arrived home. I saw a figure standing near the hatstand. I went up and whispered: 'Mary, give me a kiss.'"

"But I thought your wife's name was Kate."

"So it is. That's how she got the coat."

OBVIOUS.

The master was talking about miracles. "Supposing," he said, "you saw a man fall from a high roof, land on his head, get up, and walk away. What would you say?"

No answer.

"Supposing the same thing happened again soon after?"

No answer.

"Supposing this man did that three times in a day, what would you call it?"

"'Abit," answered a small boy.

OUT-SIZE.

A governess, anxious to convey to her pupils some idea of the relative size of different countries, said on one occasion: "Cambodia is about as large as Siam." One of the girls reproduced this piece of information in a written exercise as follows: "She says Cambodia is about as large as she is."

"Has old Ellessdee left his son anything?"
"Rather!"
"What?"
"Stranded!"

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HONEST AS THE DAY!

The waiter coughed apologetically.

"If you please, sir——" he said.

"Well, Thomas?" inquired the amiable diner. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, sir, I am—er—going to leave this restaurant, and the boss won't give me a character. I thought, perhaps, you'd just say as I was honest. I've always served you here, sir?"

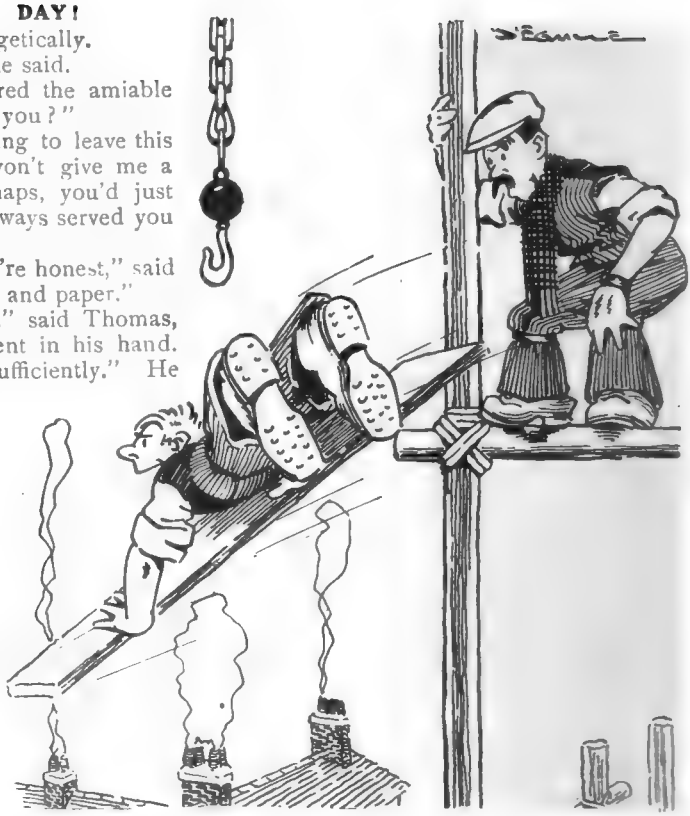
"I don't mind saying you're honest," said the diner. "Give me a pen and paper."

"Thanks very much, sir," said Thomas, firmly clutching the document in his hand. "I can never repay you sufficiently." He bent low and whispered in the diner's ear: "Come here to-morrow, sir, and I'll let you have a feed for nothing."

RINGING THE CHANGES.

"I suppose you have grown too serious to play the games of your youth?"

"No," replied Mr. Growcher. "Of course, I don't ring people's door bells and run away. I interrupt them at dinner by ringing them up over the telephone."



THE GENTLEMAN ON THE SCAFFOLD: "'Ere, don't muck about, Albert! You'll 'ave me orf!"

THE USUAL HOME-COMING.

MESSENGER BOY (with telegram for Mr. Jenkins, rings the bell about midnight): "Does Mr. Jenkins live here?"

FEMININE VOICE FROM UPSTAIRS (wearily): "Yes; bring him in."

HEADS OR TAILS?

FIRST UNDERGRAD: "What shall we do?"

SECOND UNDERGRAD: "I'll spin a coin. If it's heads we'll go to the cinema; tails, we go to the dance—and if it stands on edge we'll study."

TABLOID TRUTHS.

Swift men are seldom fast friends.

Kisses are the real things when backed up by the heart.

Very little is quite enough to make a frog hopping mad.

How difficult it is to convince stupid people that they are stupid.

The father spareth the rod and the son taketh it and goes fishing.

No man is as bad as some other man thinks he is, or as good as some woman thinks he is.

There's one peculiarity about women—the more a man knows about them the more he has to learn.

Too many people in this world are not happy unless they are bubbling over with unhappiness.

People are always regretting to-day the things they did yesterday. Therefore the lazy man has the fewest regrets.

We always say that we don't want our friends to grieve after we are gone—and they don't, after the novelty wears off.

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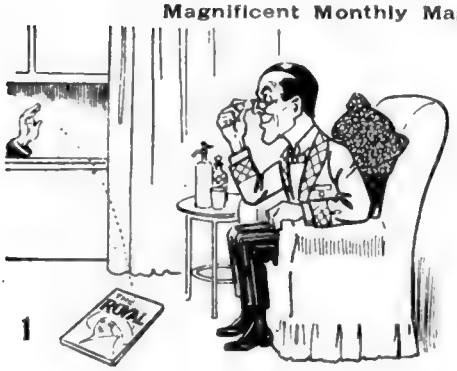
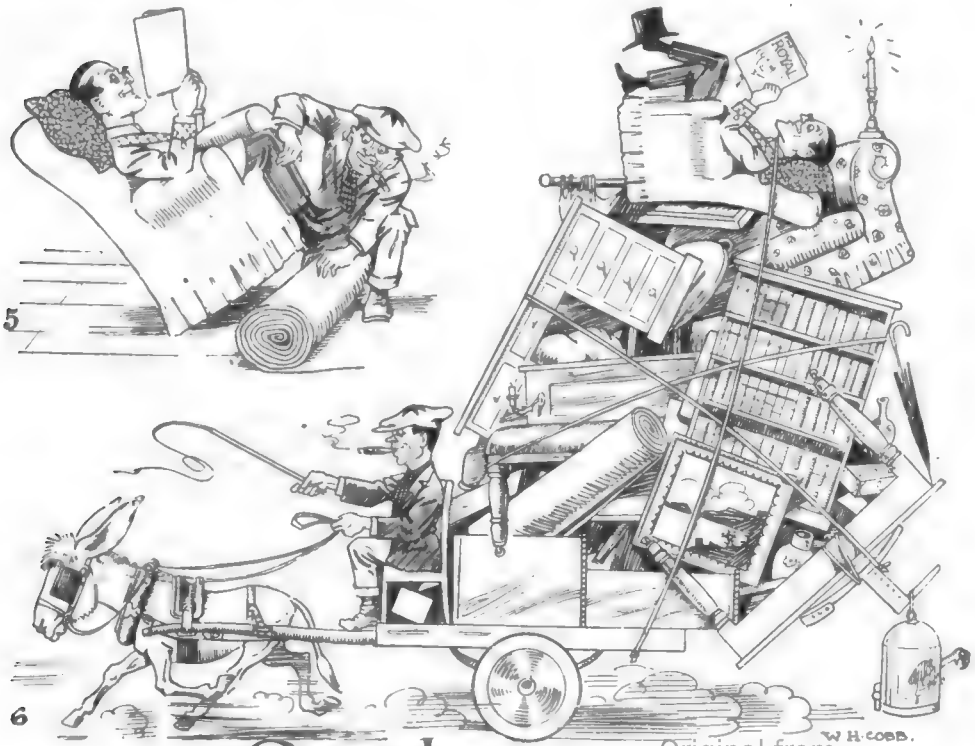
"ROYAL" ROAD TO RICHES.

Magnificent Monthly Magazine Benefits Brainy Burglar.





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THE UNINSPIRED SONG.

Love came along the April lanes.
(Find your refrain says Austin Dob,
And then you've all but done the job).
Love came along the April lanes.
But ah! methinks, that much remains,
In fact, I'm very much perplexed
As to what really happened next.
Love came along—Love came along—
But that alone can't make a song;
Along the April lanes you know
(Observe those liquids how they flow!)
The April lanes were wet, I ween,
Or rather, they were dankly green.
And where the verdant boughs bent low
A laddie and his lass did go.
(Of course in songs one ought to say
They wandered down the wilding way).
Love came along and met the twain
(Good word!) some place along the lane.
And when they met what did they do?
Ah, now, I say it's up to you.
How should I know? I wasn't there,
And why should anybody care?
Still 'tis the loveliest of refrains:
Love came along the April lanes!

C. Castle.

ONLY SOMETIMES.

An English lady was running down Americans and everything American. On the other side of the table sat an American lady, who had listened patiently to the tirade and was beginning to look angry.

"Why, they even burn black men in the States," said the English lady.

The American lady leaned over towards her.

"Only," she said gently, "in parts where coal is too expensive."

UNCONTROLLED?

Cecil and Annie were out motoring, and Annie insisted on being allowed to drive the car. After some persuasion, he reluctantly acquiesced, and his fears were soon realised.

"Oh, Cecil," the girl cried excitedly, "take it quickly! Here comes a ditch!"

A PRE-WAR MODEL.

A maiden lady of uncertain age became very indignant when the census official asked how old she was.

"Did you see the girls next door?" she asked—"the Hill twins?"

"Certainly."

"Well," she snapped, "I'm just as old as they are!"

"Oh, very well!" said the official; and he wrote in his book: "Sarah Stokes, as old as the hills."

AS THEY SAY——

A East Riding farmer coom to live on a farm on t' Bradforth Corporation estate, nut far thru Wind'ill, wheer they talk Brooad Yorksher to perfection. T'new farmer wor livverin' milk wun mornin', an' when t'woman complained hah deear it wor gettin' he explained: "Coo's is fifty poond apiece, noo!" When t'milkman 'ad gooan t'Wind'ill woman turned tuv her husband an' said: "Aw reckon nowt o' them theer ferriners. What the hengment can't he call 'em cahs for atstead o' coos?"

FATHER (severely): "Now, John Willie, you stop it! You shan't go to the pictures! Chasing your poor old grandfather about!"

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"To Let."

By John Galsworthy.

Illustrated by W. Hatherell, R.I.

Soames Forsyte's daughter, Fleur, is in love with Jon, the son of Soames' divorced wife, Irene. She and her husband, Jolyon Forsyte—who is Soames' cousin—are much disturbed lest Jon should discover that his mother was divorced by Fleur's father. Soames is equally apprehensive on Fleur's account. While staying with Holly Dartie—(Jolyon's daughter by a previous wife)—a casual meeting between Fleur and Jon develops into a charming idyll. Fleur arrives home to find her father seriously uneasy at her growing affection for Jon—sentenced to two months abroad as a cure for his infatuation—and a trifle suspicious of her mother's friendship with Prosper Profond, a wealthy Belgian.

PART II.

I

MOTHER AND SON.

To say that Jon Forsyte accompanied his mother to Spain unwillingly would scarcely have been adequate. He went as a well-natured dog goes for a walk with its mistress, leaving a choice mutton-bone on the lawn. He went looking back at it. Forsytes deprived of their mutton-bones are wont to sulk. But Jon had little sulk in his composition. He adored his mother, and it was his first travel. There had been no difficulty in turning Italy into Spain, by simply saying: "I'd rather go to Spain, Mum; you've been to Italy so many times; I'd like it new for both of us."

The fellow was subtle besides being naïf. He never forgot that he was going to shorten the proposed two months into six weeks, and must therefore show no sign of wishing to do so. For one with so enticing a mutton-bone and so fixed an idea, he made a good travelling companion, indifferent to where or when he arrived, superior to food, and thoroughly appreciative of a country strange even to the most travelled Englishman. Fleur's wisdom in refusing to write to him was profound, for he reached each new place entirely without hope or fever, and could concentrate immediate attention on the donkeys and tumbling bells, the priests, patios, beggars, children, crowing cocks, sombreros, cactus hedges, old high white villages, goats, olive trees, greening plains, singing birds in tiny cages, water-sellers, sunsets, melons, mules, great churches, pictures, and swimming grey-brown mountains of a fascinating land.

It was already hot, and they enjoyed an absence of their compatriots. Jon, who, so far as he knew, had no blood in him which was not English, was often innately unhappy in the presence of his own countrymen. He felt they had no nonsense about them, and took a more practical view of things than himself. He confided to his mother that he must be an unsociable beast—it was jolly to be away from everybody who could talk about the things people did talk about. To which Irene had replied simply:

"Yes, Jon, I know."

In this isolation he had unparalleled opportunities of appreciating what few sons can apprehend, the whole-heartedness of a mother's love. Knowledge of something kept from her made him, no doubt, unduly sensitive, and a Southern people stimulated his admiration for her type of beauty which he had been accustomed to hear called Spanish, but which he now perceived to be no such thing. Her beauty was neither English, French, Spanish, nor Italian—it was special! He appreciated, too, as never before, his mother's subtlety of instinct. He could not tell, for instance, whether she had noticed his absorption in that Goya picture, "La Vendimia," or whether she knew that he had slipped back there after lunch and

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again next morning, to stand before it full half-an-hour, a second and third time. It was not Fleur, of course, but like enough to give him heartache—so dear to lovers—remembering her standing at the foot of his bed with her hand held above her head.

To keep a postcard reproduction of this picture in his pocket and slip it out to look at became for Jon one of those bad habits which soon or late disclose themselves to eyes sharpened by love, fear, or jealousy. And his mother's were sharpened by all three. In Granada he was fairly caught, sitting on a sun-warmed stone bench in a little battlemented garden on the Alhambra hill, whence he ought to have been looking at the view. His mother, he had thought, was examining the stocks in pots between the polled scacias, when her voice said:

"Is that your favourite Goya, Jon?"

He checked, too late, a movement such as he might have made at school to conceal some surreptitious document, and answered: "Yes."

"It certainly is most charming; but I think I prefer the 'Quitasol.' Your father would go crazy about Goya; I don't believe he saw them when he was in Spain in '92."

In '92—nine years before he had been born! What had been the previous existences of his father and his mother? If they had a right to share in his future, surely he had a right to share in their past. He looked up at her. Something in her face—a look of life hard-lived, the mysterious impress of emotions, experience, and suffering—seemed with its incalculable depth, its purchased sanctity, to make curiosity impertinent. His mother must have had a wonderfully interesting life; she was so beautiful, and so—so—but he could not frame what he felt about her. He got up and stood gazing down at the town, at the plain green with crops, and the ring of mountains glamorous in sinking sunshine.

Her life was like the past of this old Moorish city, full, deep, remote—his own life as yet such a baby of a thing, hopelessly ignorant and innocent! They said that in those mountains to the West, which rose sheer from the blue-green plain, as if out of a sea, Phœnicians had dwelt—a dark, strange, secret race, above the land! His mother's life was as unknown to him, as secret as that Phœnician past was to the town down there, whose cocks crowed and whose children played and clamoured so gaily day in day out. He felt aggrieved that she should know all about him and he nothing about her except that she loved him and his father, and was beautiful. His callow ignorance—he had not even had the advantage of the war like nearly everybody else!—made him small in his own eyes.

That night from the balcony of his bedroom he gazed down on the roof of the town, as if inlaid with honeycomb of jet, ivory and gold; and long after he lay awake listening to the cry of the sentry as the hours struck, and forming in his head these lines:

Voice in the night crying, down in the old sleeping
Spanish city darkened under her white stars!

What says the voice—its clear lingering anguish?—
Just the watchman, telling his dateless tale of safety?
Just a road man, flinging to the moon his song?

No! 'Tis one deprived, whose lover's heart is weeping.
Just his cry: "How long?"

The word "deprived" seemed to him cold and unsatisfactory, but bereaved was too final, and no other word of two syllables short-long came to him, which would enable him to keep "whose heart is weeping." It was past two by the time he had finished it, and past three before he went to sleep, having said it over to himself at least twenty-four times. Next day he wrote it out and enclosed it in one of those letters to Fleur which he always finished before he went down, so as to have his mind free and companionable.

About noon that same day, on the tiled terrace of their hotel, he felt a sudden dull pain in the back of his head, a queer sensation in the eyes and sickness. The sun had touched him too affectionately. The next three days were passed in semi-darkness, and a dulled aching indifference to all except the feel of ice on his forehead and his mother's smile. She never moved from his room, never relaxed her noiseless vigilance, which seemed to Jon angelic. But there were moments when he was extremely sorry for himself, and wished terribly that Fleur could see him. Several times he took poignant imaginary leave of her and the earth, tears oozing out of his eyes. He even prepared the message he would send to her by his mother—who would regret to her dying day that she had ever sought to separate them—his poor mother! He was not slow, however, in perceiving that he had now his excuse for going home.

Towards half-past six each evening came a "gasgacha" of bells—a cascade of tumbling chimes, mounting from the city below and falling back chime on

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June slightly narrowed her blue eyes. . . . "What do you think of Jon?" The girl lifted the roses in her hand, looked at them, and answered calmly: "He's quite a nice boy, I think."
[Page 510, col 1.]

chime. After listening to them on the fourth day, he said suddenly:

"I'd like to be back in England, Mum; the sun's too hot."

"Very well, darling. As soon as you're fit to travel." And at once he felt better and—meaner.

They had been out five weeks when they turned towards home. Jon's head was restored to its pristine clarity, but he was condemned to a hat lined by his mother with many layers of orange and green silk, and he still walked from choice in the shade.

As the long struggle of discretion between them drew to its close, he wondered more and more whether she could see his eagerness to get back to that which she had brought him away from. Condemned by Spanish Providence to spend a day in

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Madrid between their trains, it was but natural to go again to the Prado.

Jon was elaborately casual this time before his Goya girl. Now that he was going back to her, he could afford a lesser scrutiny. It was his mother who lingered before the picture, saying:

"The face and figure of the girl are exquisite."

Jon heard her uneasily. Did she understand? But he felt once more that he was no match for her in self-control and subtlety. She could, in some super-sensitive way, of which he had not the secret, feel the pulse of his thoughts; she knew by instinct what he hoped and feared and wished.

It made him terribly uncomfortable and guilty, having, beyond most boys, a conscience. He wished she would be frank with him; he almost hoped for an open struggle. But none came, and steadily, silently, they travelled north.

Thus did he first learn how much better than men women play a waiting game. In Paris they had again to pause for a day. Jon was grieved because it lasted two, owing to certain matters in connection with a dressmaker; as if his mother, who looked beautiful in anything, had any need of dresses! The happiest moment of his travel was that when he stepped on to the Folkestone boat.

Standing by the bulwark rail, with her arm in his, she said:

"I'm afraid you haven't enjoyed it much, Jon. But you've been very sweet to me."

Jon squeezed her arm.

"Oh, yes, I've enjoyed it awfully—except for my head lately."

And now that the end had come, he really had, feeling a sort of glamour over the past weeks—a kind of painful pleasure, such as he had tried to screw into those lines about the voice in the night crying—the sort of feeling he had known as a small boy listening avidly to Chopin, and wanting to cry. And he wondered why it was that he couldn't say to her quite simply what she had said to him:

"You were very sweet to me." Odd—one never could be nice and natural like that! "I expect we shall be sick," he said.

They were, and reached London somewhat extenuated, having been away six weeks and two days, without ever a word of the subject which had hardly ever ceased to occupy their minds.

II.

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS.

Deprived of his wife and son by the Spanish adventure, Jolyon found the solitude of Robin Hill intolerable. A philosopher when he has all that he wants is different from a philosopher when he has not. Accustomed, however, to the idea, if not to the reality of resignation, he would perhaps have faced it out but for his daughter June.

He was a "lame duck" now, and on her conscience. Having achieved — momentarily—the rescue of an etcher in low circumstances, which she happened to have in hand, she appeared at Robin Hill a fortnight after Irene and Jon had gone. The little lady was living now in a tiny house with a big studio at Chiswick.

A Forsyte of the best period, so far as the lack of responsibility was concerned, she had overcome the difficulty of a reduced income in a manner satisfactory to herself and her father. The rent of the Gallery off Cork Street which he had bought for her, and her increased income tax happening to balance, it had been quite simple—she no longer paid him the rent.

The Gallery might be expected now at any time, after eighteen years of barren usufruct, to pay its way, so that she was sure her father would not feel it. Through this device she still had twelve hundred a year, and by reducing what she ate, and, in place of two Belgians in a poor way, employing one Austrian in a poorer, practically the same surplus for the relief of genius.

After three days at Robin Hill, she carried her father back with her to Town. In those three days she had stumbled on the secret he had kept for two years, and had instantly decided to cure him. She knew, in fact, the very man. He had done wonders with Paul Post—that painter a little in advance of Futurism—and she was impatient with her father because his eyebrows would go up and because he had heard of neither. Of course, if he hadn't "faith" he would never get well!

It was absurd not to have faith in the man who had healed Paul Post so that he had only just relapsed from having overworked or over-lived himself again. The great thing about this healer was that he relied on Nature. He had made a special study of the symptoms of Nature—when his patient failed in any natural symptom, he supplied the poison which caused it—and there you were!

She was extremely hopeful. Her father had clearly not been living a natural life at Robin Hill, and she intended to provide the symptoms. He was—she felt—out of touch with the times, which was not natural; his heart wanted stimulating.

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In the little Chiswick house she and the Austrian—a grateful soul, so devoted to June for rescuing her that she was in danger of decease from overwork—stimulated Jolyon in all sorts of ways, preparing him for his cure. But they could not keep his eyebrows down; as, for example, when the Austrian woke him at eight o'clock just as he was going to sleep, or June took *The Times* away from him, because it was unnatural to read that stuff when he ought to be taking an interest in "life." He never failed, indeed, to be astonished at her resource, especially in the evenings.

For his benefit, as she declared, though he suspected that she also got something out of it, she assembled the Age so far as it was satellite to genius; and with some solemnity it would move up and down the studio before him in the Fox-trot, and that more mental form of dancing—the One-step—which so pulled against the music, that Jolyon's eyebrows would be almost lost in his hair from wonder at the strain it must impose on the dancers' will-power. Aware that, hung on the line in the Water Colour Society, he was a back number to those with any pretension to be called artists, he would sit in the darkest corner he could find, and wonder about rhythm, on which so long ago he had been raised. And when June brought some girl or young man up to him, he would rise humbly to their level so far as that was possible, and think: "Dear me! This is very dull for them!"

Having his father's perennial sympathy with Youth, he used to get very tired from entering into their points of view. But it was all stimulating, and he never failed in admiration of his daughter's indomitable spirit. Even genius itself attended these gatherings now and then, with its nose on one side; and June always introduced it to her father. This, she felt, was exceptionally good for him; for genius was a natural symptom he had never had, fond as she was of him.

Certain as a man can be that she was his own daughter, he often wondered whence she got herself—her red-gold hair, now greyed into a special colour; her direct, spirited face, so different from his own rather folded and subtilised countenance, her little light figure, when he and most of the Forsytes were tall. And he would dwell on the origin of species, and debate whether she might be Danish or Celtic. Celtic, he thought, from her pugnacity and her taste in fillets and djibbahs. It was not too much to say that he preferred her to the Age with which she was surrounded, youthful though, for the greater part, it was. She took, however, too much interest in his teeth, for he still had some of those natural symptoms.

Her dentist at once found "*staphylococcus aureus* present in pure culture" (which might cause boils, of course), and wanted to take out all the teeth he had and supply him with two complete sets of unnatural symptoms. Jolyon's native tenacity was roused, and in the studio that evening he developed his objections. He had never had any boils, and his own teeth would last his time. Of course—June admitted—they would last his time if he didn't have them out! But if he had more teeth he would have a better heart, and his time would be longer. His recalcitrance—she said—was a symptom of his whole attitude: he was taking it lying down. He ought to be fighting. When was he going to see the man who had cured Paul Post? Jolyon was very sorry, but the fact was he was not going to see him.

June chafed. Pondridge—she said—the healer, was such a fine man, and he had such difficulty in making two ends meet and getting his theories recognised. It was just such indifference and prejudice as her father ma ifested which was keeping him back. It would be so splendid for both of them!

"I perceive," said Jolyon, "that you are trying to kill two birds with one stone."

"To cure, you mean!" cried June.

"My dear, it's the same thing."

June protested. It was unfair to say that without a trial.

Jolyon thought he might not have the chance of saying it after.

"Dad," cried June, "you're hopeless."

"That," said Jolyon, "is a fact, but I wish to remain hopeless as long as possible. I shall let sleeping dogs lie, my child. They are quiet at present."

"That's not giving science a chance," cried June. "You've no idea how devoted Pondridge is. He puts his science before everything."

"Just," replied Jolyon, puffing at the cigarette to which he was reduced, "as Mr. Paul Post puts his art, eh? Art for Art's sake—Science for the sake of Science. I know those enthusiastic, egomaniac gentry. They vivisect you without blinking. I'm enough of a Forsyte to give them the go-by, June."

"Dad," said June, "if you only knew how old-fashioned that sounds! Nobody can afford to be half-hearted nowadays."

"I'm afraid," murmured Jolyon with his smile, "that's the only natural symptom with which Mr. Pondridge need not supply me.

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We are born to be extreme or to be moderate, my dear; though, if you'll forgive my saying so, half the people nowadays who believe they're extreme are really very moderate. I'm getting on as well as I can expect, and I must leave it at that."

June was silent, having experienced in her time the inexorable character of her father's amiable obstinacy so far as his own freedom of action was concerned.

How he came to let her know why Irene had taken Jon to Spain puzzled Jolyon, for he had little confidence in her discretion. After she had brooded on the news, it brought a rather sharp discussion, during which he perceived to the full the fundamental opposition between her active temperament and his wife's passivity. He even gathered that a little soreness still remained from that generation-old struggle between them over the body of Philip Bosinney, in which the passive had so signally triumphed over the active principle.

They turned in among the larches, and suddenly, at the winding of the path, came on Irene sitting on an old log seat. . . .

According to June, it was foolish, and even cowardly, to hide the past from Jon. Sheer opportunism, she called it.

"Which," Jolyon put in mildly, "is the principle of real life, my dear."

"Oh!" cried June, "*you* don't really defend her for not telling Jon, Dad. If it were left to you, you would."

"I might, but simply because I know he must find out, which will be worse than if we told him."

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His mother's startled face was changing quickly to the impersonal and gracious. . . . "I'm very glad to see you. It was nice of Jon to think of bringing you down to us. [*Page 516, col. 2.*]

"Then why *don't* you tell him? It's just sleeping dogs again."

"My dear," said Jolyon, "I wouldn't for the world go against Irene's instinct. He's her boy."

"Yours, too," cried June.

"What's a man's instinct compared with a mother's?"

"Well, I think it's very weak of you."

"I dare say," cried Jolyon —"I dare say."

And that was all she got from him; but the matter rankled in her brain. She could not bear sleeping dogs. And there stirred in her a tortuous impulse to push the matter towards decision. Jon ought to be told, so that either his feeling might be nipped in the bud or, flowering in spite of the past, come to fruition. And she determined to see Fleur and judge for herself.

When June determined on anything, delicacy became a minor consideration. After all, she was Soames' cousin, and they were both interested in pictures. She would go and tell him that he ought to buy a Paul Post, or perhaps a piece of sculpture by Boris Strumolowski, and, of course, she would say nothing to her father. She went on the following Sunday, looking so determined that she had some difficulty in getting a cab at Reading Station.

The river country was lovely in those days of her own month, and all the unappeased sexual instinct in June ached at its loveliness. She who had passed through this life without knowing what union was, had a love of natural beauty which was almost madness. And when she came to that choice spot where Soames had pitched his tent, she dismissed her cab, because, business over, she wanted to revel in the bright water and the woods.

She appeared at his front door, therefore, as a mere pedestrian and sent in her card. It was in June's character to know that when her nerves were fluttering she was doing

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something worth while. If one's nerves did not flutter, one was taking the line of least resistance, and knew that nobleness was not obliging her.

She was conducted to a drawing-room which, though not in her style, showed every mark of fastidious elegance. Thinking, "Too much taste—too many knick-knacks," she saw in an old lacquer-framed mirror the figure of a girl coming in from the veranda. Clothed in white and holding some white roses in her hand, she had, reflected in that silvery-grey pool of glass, a vision-like appearance, as if a pretty ghost had come out of the green garden.

"How do you do?" said June, turning round. "I'm a cousin of your father's."

"Oh, yes; I saw you in that confectioner's."

"With my young step-brother. Is your father in?"

"He will be directly. He's only gone for a little walk."

June slightly narrowed her blue eyes and lifted her decided chin.

"Your name's Fleur, isn't it? I've heard of you from Holly. What do you think of Jon?"

The girl lifted the roses in her hand, looked at them, and answered calmly:

"He's quite a nice boy, I think."

"Not a bit like Holly or me, is he?"

"Not a bit."

"She's cool," thought June.

And suddenly the girl said: "I wish you'd tell me why our families don't get on?"

Confronted with the question she had advised her father to answer, June was silent; whether because this girl was trying to get something out of her, or simply because what one would do theoretically is not always what one will do when it comes to the point.

"You know," said the girl, "the surest way to make people find out the worst is to keep them ignorant. My father's told me it was a quarrel about property. But I don't believe it; we've both got heaps. They wouldn't have been so *bourgeois* as all that."

June flushed. The word applied to her grandfather and father offended her.

"My grandfather," she said, "was very generous, and my father is, too; neither of them was in the least *bourgeois*."

"Well, what was it, then?" repeated the girl. Conscious that this young Forsyte meant having what she wanted, June at once determined to prevent her, and to get something for herself instead.

"Why do you want to know?"

The girl smelled at her roses. "I only want to know because they won't tell me."

"Well, it *was* about property, but there's more than one kind."

"That makes it worse. Now I really *must* know."

June's small and resolute face quivered. She was wearing a round cap, and her hair had fluffed out under it. She looked quite young at that moment, rejuvenated by encounter.

"You know," she said, "I saw you drop your handkerchief. Is there anything between you and Jon? Because if so, you had better drop that too."

The girl paled, yet smiled.

"If there were, that isn't the way to make me."

At the gallantry of that reply June held out her hand.

"I like you; but I don't like your father; I never have. We may as well be frank."

"Did you come down to tell him that?"

June laughed. "No; I came down to see *you*."

"Oh!"

This girl could fence.

"I'm two-and-a-half times your age," said June, "but I quite sympathise. It's horrid not to have one's own way."

The girl smiled. "I think you *might* tell me."

How the child stuck to her point!

"It's not my secret. But I'll see what I can do because I think both you and Jon *ought* to be told. And now I'll say good-bye."

"Won't you wait and see Father?"

June shook her head. "How can I get over to the other side?"

"I'll row you across."

"Look!" said June impulsively, "next time you're in London come and see me. This is where I live. I generally have young people in the evening. But I shouldn't tell your father that you're coming."

The girl smiled.

Watching her scull the skiff across, June thought: "She's awfully pretty and well-made. I never thought Soames would have a daughter as pretty as this. She and Jon would make a lovely couple."

The instinct to couple, starved within herself, was always at work in June. She stood watching Fleur row back; the girl took her hand off a scull to wave farewell; and June walked languidly on between the meadows and the river, with an ache in her heart. Youth to youth, like the dragon-flies chasing each other, and love, like the sun, warming them through and through. Her

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youth! So long ago, when Phil and she——! And since? Nothing—no one had been quite what she had wanted. And so she had missed it all. But what a coil was round those two young things, if they really were in love, as Holly would have it—as her father, and Irene, and Soames himself seemed to dread! What a coil, and what a barrier! And the itch for the future, the contempt, as it were, for what was overpast, which forms the active principle, moved in the heart of one who ever believed that what one wanted was more important than what other people did not want.

From the bank awhile in the warm summer stillness she watched the water-lily plants and willow leaves, the fishes rising, sniffed the scent of grass and meadow-sweet, wondering how she could force everybody to be happy. Jon and Fleur! Two little lame ducks—charming, callow, yellow little ducks! A great pity! Surely something could be done! One must not take such situations lying down. She walked on, and reached a station, hot and cross.

That evening, faithful to the impulse towards instant action which made many people avoid her, she said to her father:

"Dad, I've been down to see young Fleur. I think she's very attractive. It's no good hiding our heads under our wings, is it?"

The startled Jolyon set down his barley water, and began crumbling his bread.

"It's what you appear to be doing," he said. "Do you realise whose daughter she is?"

"Can't the dead past bury its dead?"

Jolyon rose.

"Certain things can never be buried."

"I disagree," said June. "It's that which stands in the way of all happiness and progress. You don't understand the Age, Dad. It's got no use for outgrown things. Why do you think it matters so terribly that Jon should know about his mother? Who pays any attention to that sort of thing now? The marriage laws are just as they were when Soames and Irene couldn't get a divorce, and you had to come in. We've moved, and they haven't. So nobody cares. Marriage without a decent chance of relief is only a sort of slave-owning; people oughtn't to own each other. Everybody sees that now. If Irene broke such laws, what does it matter?"

"It's not for me to disagree there," said Jolyon; "but that's all quite beside the mark. This is a matter of human feeling."

"Of course it is," cried June, "the human feeling of those two young things."

"My dear," said Jolyon with gentle exasperation, "you're talking nonsense."

"I'm not. If they prove to be really fond of each other, why should they be made unhappy because of the past?"

"*You* haven't lived that past. I have—through the feelings of my wife, through my own nerves and my imagination, as only one who is devoted can."

June, too, rose and began to wander restlessly.

"If," she said suddenly, "she were the daughter of Phil Bosinney, I could understand you better. Irene loved him; she never loved Soames."

Jolyon uttered a deep sound—the sort of noise an Italian peasant woman utters to her mule. His heart had begun beating furiously, but he paid no attention to it, quite carried away by his feelings.

"That shows how little you understand. Neither I nor Jon, if I know him, would mind a love-past. It's the brutality of a union without love. This girl is the daughter of the man who once owned Jon's mother as a negro-slave was owned. You cannot lay that ghost; don't try to, June! It's asking us to see Jon joined to the flesh and blood of the man who possessed Jon's mother against her will. It's no good mincing words; I want it clear once for all. And now I mustn't talk any more, or I shall have to sit up with this all night." And putting his hand over his heart, Jolyon turned his back on his daughter and stood looking at the river Thames.

June, who by nature never saw a hornets'-nest until she had put her head into it, was seriously alarmed. She came and slipped her arm through his. Not convinced that he was right and she herself wrong, because that was not natural to her, she was yet profoundly impressed by the obvious fact that the subject was very bad for him. She rubbed her cheek against his shoulder and said nothing.

After taking her elderly cousin across, Fleur did not land at once, but pulled in among the reeds, in the sunshine. The peaceful beauty of the afternoon seduced for a little one not much given to the vague and poetic. In the field beyond the bank where her skiff lay up, a machine drawn by a grey horse was turning an early field of hay.

She watched the green cascade of grass over and behind the light wheels with fascination—it looked so cool and fresh. The click and swish blended with the rustle of the willows and the poplars and the cooing

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of a wood-pigeon in a true river-song. Alongside, in the deep green, water-reeds like yellow snakes were writhing and nosing with the current; pied cattle on the further side stood in the shade lazily swishing their tails.

It was an afternoon to dream. And she took out Jon's letters—not flowery effusions, but haunted in their recital of things seen and done by a longing very agreeable to her, and all ending "Your devoted J." Fleur was not sentimental—her desires were ever concrete and concentrated—but what poetry there was in the daughter of Soames and Annette had certainly in those weeks of waiting gathered round her memories of Jon.

They all belonged to grass and blossom, flowers and running water. She enjoyed him in the scents absorbed by her crinkling nose. The stars could persuade her that she was standing beside him in the centre of the map of Spain, and of an early morning the dewy cobwebs, the hazy sparkle and promise of the day down in the garden, was Jon personified to her.

Two white swans came majestically by while she was reading his letters, followed by their brood of six young swans in a line, with just so much water between each tail and head as if they formed a flotilla of grey destroyers.

Fleur thrust her letters back, got out her sculls, and pulled up to the landing-stage. Crossing the lawn, she wondered whether she should tell her father of June's visit. If he learned of it from the butler, he might think it odd if she did not. It gave her, too, another chance to startle out of him the reason of the feud. She went, therefore, up the road to meet him.

Soames had gone to look at a patch of ground on which the Local Authorities were proposing to erect a sanatorium for people with weak lungs. Faithful to his native individualism, he took no part in local affairs, content to pay the rates, which were always going up.

He could not, however, remain indifferent to this new and dangerous scheme. The site was not half-a-mile from his own house. He was quite of opinion that the country should stamp out tuberculosis; but this was not the place. It should be done further away. He took, indeed, an attitude common to all true Forsytes, that disability of any sort in other people was not his affair, and the State should do its business without prejudicing in any way the natural advantages which he had acquired or inherited.

Francie, the most free-spirited Forsyte of his generation (except, perhaps, that fellow Jolyon) had once asked him in her malicious way: "Did you ever see the name Forsyte in a subscription list, Soames?" That was as it might be, but a sanatorium would depreciate the neighbourhood, and he should certainly sign the petition which was being got up against it. Returning with this decision fresh within him, he saw Fleur coming.

She was showing him more affection of late, and the quiet time down here with her in this summer weather had made him feel quite young. Annette was always running up to Town for one thing or another, so that he had Fleur to himself almost as much as he could wish. To be sure, young Mont had formed a habit of appearing on his motor-cycle almost every other day. Thank goodness, he had shaved off his half tooth brushes, and no longer looked like a mountebank!

Together with a girl friend of Fleur's, who was staying in the house, and a neighbouring youth or so, they made two couples after dinner, in the hall, to the music of the very electric pianola which performed Fox-trots unassisted, with a surprised shine on its expressive surface. Annette, even, now and then passed gracefully up and down in the arms of one or other of the young men. And Soames, coming to the drawing room door, would lift his nose a little sideways and watch them, waiting to catch a smile from Fleur; then move back to his chair by the drawing-room hearth, to peruse *The Times* or some other collector's price list. To his ever-anxious eyes Fleur showed no sign of remembering that caprice of hers.

When she reached him on the dusty road he slipped his hand within her arm.

"Who do you think has been to see you, Dad? She couldn't wait. Guess!"

"I never guess," said Soames uneasily. "Who?"

"Your cousin, June Forsyte."

Quite unconsciously Soames gripped her arm. "What did *she* want?"

"I don't know. But it was rather breaking through the feud, wasn't it?"

"Feud? What feud?"

"The one that exists in your imagination, dear."

Soames dropped her arm. Was she mocking or trying to draw him on?

"I suppose she wanted me to buy a picture," he said at last.

"I don't think so. Perhaps it was just family affection."

"She's only a first cousin once removed," muttered Soames.

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"And the daughter of your enemy."

"What d'you mean by that?"

"I beg your pardon, dear; I thought he was."

"Enemy!" repeated Soames. "It's ancient history. I don't know where you get your notions."

"From June Forsyte."

It had come to her as an inspiration that if he thought she knew, or were on the edge of knowledge, he would tell her.

Soames was startled, but she had underrated his caution and tenacity.

"If you know," he said coldly, "why do you plague me?"

Fleur saw that she had overreached herself.

"I don't want to plague you, darling. As you say, why want to know more? Why want to know anything of this 'small' mystery—*Je m'en fiche*, as Profond says."

"That chap!" said Soames profoundly.

That chap, indeed, played a considerable, if invisible, part this summer, for he had not turned up again. Ever since that Sunday when Fleur had drawn attention to him prowling on the lawn, Soames had thought of him a good deal, and always in connection with Annette, for no reason, except that she was looking handsomer than for some time past.

His possessive instinct, subtler, less formal, more elastic since the War, kept all misgiving underground. As one looks on some American river, quiet and pleasant, knowing that an alligator, perhaps, is lying in the mud with his snout just raised and indistinguishable from a snag of wood, so Soames looked on the river of his own existence, subconscious of Monsieur Profond, refusing to see more than the suspicion of his snout.

He had at this epoch in his life practically all he wanted, and was as nearly happy as his nature would permit. His senses were at rest; his affections found all the vent they needed in his daughter; his collection was well known, his money well-invested; his health excellent save for a touch of liver now and again; he had not yet begun to worry seriously about what would happen after death, inclining to think that nothing would happen.

He resembled one of his own gilt-edged securities, and to knock the gilt off by seeing anything he could avoid seeing would be, he felt instinctively, perverse and retrogressive. Those two crumpled rose-leaves, Fleur's caprice and Monsieur Profond's snout, would level away if he lay on them industriously.

That evening Chance, which visits the lives of even the best-invested Forsytes, put a clue in Fleur's hands. Her father came down to dinner without a handkerchief, and had occasion to blow his nose.

"I'll get you one, dear," said Fleur, and ran upstairs. In the sachet where she sought for it—an old sachet of very faded silk—there were two compartments; one held handkerchiefs, the other was buttoned, and contained something flat and hard. By some childish impulse Fleur unbuttoned it. There was a frame, and in it a photograph of herself as a child.

She gazed at it, fascinated, as one is by one's own presentment. It slipped a little under her fidgeting thumb, and she saw that another photograph was behind. She pressed her own down further, and perceived a face, which she seemed to know, of a young woman, very good-looking, in a very old style of evening dress. Slipping her own photograph up over it again, she took out a handkerchief and went down.

Only on the staircase did she identify that face—surely—surely Jon's mother! The conviction came as a shock, and she stood still in a flurry of thought. Why, of course! Jon's father had married the woman her father had wanted to marry—had cheated him out of her, perhaps. Then afraid of showing by her manner that she had lighted on his secret, she refused to think further, and, shaking out the silk handkerchief, entered the dining-room.

"I chose the softest, Father."

"H'm!" said Soames. "I only use those after a cold. Never mind!" And he blew his nose.

That evening passed for Fleur in putting two and two together; recalling the look on her father's face in the confectioner's shop—a look strange and coldly intimate, a queer look. He must have loved that woman very much to have kept her photograph all this time, in spite of having lost her.

Unsparing and matter-of-fact, her mind darted to his relations with her own mother. Had he ever really loved *her*? She thought not. Jon was the son of the woman he had really loved. Surely, then, he ought not to mind his daughter loving him; it only wanted getting used to. And a sigh of sheer relief was caught in the folds of her nightgown slipping over her head.

III.

MEETINGS.

Youth only recognises Age by fits and starts. Jon, for one, had never really seen his father's age till he came back from Spain.

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The face of the fourth Jolyon, worn by waiting, gave him quite a shock—it looked so wan and old. His father's mask had been forced awry by the emotion of the meeting, so that the boy suddenly realised how much he must have felt their absence. He summoned to his aid the thought: "Well, I didn't want to go!" It was out of date for Youth to defer to Age. But Jon was by no means typically modern. His father had always been "so jolly" to him, and to feel that one meant to begin again at once the conduct which his father had suffered six weeks loneliness to cure was not agreeable.

At the question: "Well, old man, how did the great Goya strike you?" his conscience pricked him badly. The great Goya only existed because he had created a face which resembled Fleur's.

On the night of their return he went to bed full of compunction; but awoke full of anticipation. It was only the fifth of July and no meeting was fixed with Fleur until the ninth. He was to have three days at home before going back to farm. He must contrive to see her!

In the lives of men the inexorable rhythm, caused by the need for trousers, not even the fondest parents can deny. On the second day, therefore, Jon went to Town, and having satisfied his conscience by ordering what was indispensable in Conduit Street, turned his face toward Piccadilly. Stratton Street, where her Club was, adjoined Devonshire House. A mere chance if she were at her Club. He dawdled down Bond Street with a beating heart, noticing the superiority of all other young men to himself. They wore their clothes with such an air; they had assurance; they were *old*. He was suddenly overwhelmed by the conviction that Fleur must have forgotten him.

Absorbed in his own feelings for her all these weeks, he had mislaid that possibility. The corners of his mouth drooped, his hands felt clammy. Fleur with the pick of youth at the beck of her smile—Fleur incomparable! It was an evil moment. Well, one must be able to face anything! Bracing himself with that dour reflection in front of a bric-à-brac shop, he moved on. At this high-water mark of what was once the London season, there was nothing to mark it out from any other except a grey top hat or two and the sun. Once bit, twice shy—Jon walked in the shade. Turning the corner into Piccadilly, he ran into Val Dartie moving towards the Iseeum Club to which he had just been elected.

"Hallo! young man, you're back then! Where are you off to?"

Jon flushed. "I've just been to my tailor's."

Val looked him up and down. "That's good. I'm going in to order some cigarettes, then come and have some lunch."

Jon thanked him. He might get some news of *her* from Val.

The condition of England, that nightmare of its Press and Public men, was seen in different perspective within the tobacconist's which they entered.

"Yes, sir; precisely the cigarette I used to supply your father with. Bless me! Mr. Montague Dartie was a customer here from—let me see—the year Melton won the Derby. One of my very best customers he was." And a faint smile illumined the tobacconist's face. "Many's the tip he's given me, to be sure! I suppose he took a couple of hundred of these every week, year in, year out, and never changed his cigarette. Very affable gentleman, brought me a lot of custom. I was sorry he met with that accident. One misses an old customer like him."

Val smiled. His father's decease had closed an account which had been running longer, probably, than any other; and in a ring of smoke puffed out from that time-honoured cigarette he seemed to see again his father's face, dark, good-looking, moustachioed, a little puffy, in the only halo it had earned. His father had his fame here, any way—a man who smoked two hundred cigarettes a week, who could give tips, and run accounts for ever. To his tobacconist a hero. It was some distinction to inherit.

"*I* pay cash," he said, "how much?"

"To his son, sir, and cash—ten and six. I shall never forget Mr. Montague Dartie. I've known him stand talkin' to me half-an-hour. We don't get many like him now, with everybody in such a hurry. The war was bad for manners. You were in it, I see."

"No," said Val, tapping his knee. "I got this in the war before. Saved my life, I expect. Do you want any cigarettes, Jon?"

Rather ashamed, Jon murmured: "I don't smoke, you know;" and saw the tobacconist's lips twisted, as if uncertain whether to say, "Good God!" or "Now's your chance, sir!"

"That's right," said Val, "keep off it while you can. You'll want it when you take a knock. This is really the same tobacco, then?"

"Identical, sir; a little dearer, that's all. Wonderful staying power—the British Empire, I always say."

"Send me down a hundred a week to this

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address, and invoice it monthly. Come on, Jon."

Jon entered the Iseeum with curiosity. Except to lunch now and then at the Hotch-Potch with his father, he had never been in a London club. The Iseeum, comfortable and unpretentious, did not move, could not, so long as George Forsyte sat on its committee, where his culinary acumen was almost the controlling force. The Club had made a stand against the newly-rich, and it had taken all George Forsyte's prestige, and praise of him as a "good sportsman" to bring in Prosper Profond.

The two were lunching together when the half brothers-in-law entered the dining-room, and attracted by George's forefinger, sat down at their table. Val with his shrewd eyes and charming smile, Jon with solemn lips and an attractive shyness in his glance. There was an air of privilege around that corner table, as though past-masters were eating there. Jon was fascinated by the heavy hypnotic atmosphere. The waiter, lean in the chaps, pervaded with such deferential camaraderie. He seemed to hang on George Forsyte's lips, to watch the gloat in his eye with a kind of sympathy, and to follow the movements of the heavy club-marked silver fondly. His liveried arm and confidential voice alarmed Jon, they came so secretly over his shoulder.

Except for George's "Your grandfather tipped me once; he was a deuced good judge of a cigar," neither he nor the other past-master took any notice of him, and he was grateful for this. The talk was all about the breeding, points and prices of horses, and he listened to it vaguely at first, wondering how it was possible to retain so much knowledge in a head. He could not take his eyes off the dark past-master—what he said was so deliberate and discouraging—such heavy, queer, smiled-out words. Jon was thinking of butterflies, when he heard him say:

"I wand to see Mr. Soames Forsyde take an interest in 'orses."

"Old Soames! He's a dry file!"

With all his might Jon tried not to grow red, as the dark past-master went on.

"His daughter's rather an attractive small girl. Mr. Soames Forsyde is a bit old-fashioned. I wand to see him have a small pleasure some day."

"Don't you worry; he's not so miserable as he looks. He'll never show he's enjoying anything—they might try and take it from him. Old Soames! Once bit, twice shy!"

"Well, Jon," said Val hastily, "if you've finished, we'll go and have coffee."

"Who were those?" said Jon, as they went downstairs. "I didn't quite——"

"Old George Forsyte is a first cousin of your father's, and of my Uncle Soames. He's always been here. The other chap, Profond, is a queer fish. I think he's hanging round Soames' wife, if you ask me!"

Jon looked at him startled. "But that's awful," he said; "I mean—for Fleur."

"Don't suppose Fleur cares very much; she's very up-to-date."

"Her mother!"

"You're very green, Jon."

Jon reddened. "Mothers," he said, angrily, "are different."

"You're right," said Val suddenly, "but things aren't what they were when I was your age. There's a 'To-morrow we die' feeling. That's what old George meant about my Uncle Soames. *He* doesn't mean to die to-morrow."

Jon said, quickly: "What's the matter between him and my father?"

"Stable secret, Jon. Take my advice, and bottle up. You'll do no good by knowing. Have a liqueur?"

Jon shook his head.

"I hate the way people keep things from one," he muttered, "and then sneer at one for being green."

"Well, ask Holly. If *she* won't tell you, you'll believe it's for your own good, I suppose."

Jon got up. "I must go now," he said; "thanks awfully for the lunch."

Val smiled up at him, half amused, half sorry. The boy looked so upset.

"All right," he said. "See you on Friday."

"I don't know," murmured Jon.

And he did not. This conspiracy of silence made him feel desperate. It was humiliating to be treated like a child. He retraced his moody steps to Stratton Street. He had made no inquiry about Fleur. But he must go to her club now, and find out the worst. No! Miss Forsyte was not in the club. She might be in perhaps later. She was often in on Monday—they could not say. Jon said he would call again, and, crossing into the Green Park, flung himself down under a tree. The sun was bright, and a breeze fluttered the leaves of the young lime tree beneath which he lay; but his heart ached. It was all so blind—such a darkness seemed gathered round his happiness. He heard Big Ben chime "Three" above the traffic. The sound moved something in him, and taking out a piece of paper, he began to scribble on it with a pencil. He had jotted a stanza, and was searching the grass and his emotions for another verse, when something hard touched

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his shoulder—a green parasol. There above him stood Fleur! Jon sprang up.

"They told me you'd been, and were coming back. So I thought you might be out here, and you are—it's rather wonderful!"

"Oh! Fleur," Jon gasped, "I thought you'd have forgotten me."

"What! when I told you I shouldn't."

Jon grasped her arms.

"It's too much luck! Let's get away from this side." He almost dragged her on through that too thoughtfully regulated Park, to find some cover where they could sit and hold each other's hands.

"Hasn't anybody cut in?" he said, suddenly gazing round at her lashes in suspense above her cheeks.

"There *is* a young idiot, but he doesn't count."

Jon felt a twitch of compassion for the—young idiot.

"You know I've had sunstroke," he said. "I didn't tell you."

"Really! Was it interesting?"

"No. Mother was an angel. Has anything happened to *you?*"

"Nothing. Except that I think I've found out what's wrong between our families, Jon."

His heart began beating very fast.

"I believe my father wanted to marry your mother and your father got her instead."

"Oh!"

"I came on a photo of her; it was in a frame behind a photo of me. Of course, if he was very fond of her, that would have made him pretty bitter, wouldn't it?"

Jon thought for a minute. "Not if she loved my father best."

"But suppose they were engaged?"

"If we were engaged, and you found you loved somebody better, I might go cracked, but I shouldn't grudge it you."

"I should. You mustn't ever do that with me, Jon."

"My God! Not much!"

"I don't believe that he's ever really cared for my mother."

Jon was silent. Val's words, the two past-masters in the club.

"You see we don't know," went on Fleur. "It may have been a great shock. She may have behaved badly to him. People do."

"My mother wouldn't."

Fleur shrugged her shoulders. "I don't think we know much about our fathers and mothers. We just see them in the light of the way they treat *us*; but then, Jon, they treated other people, you know, before we were born—plenty, I expect. You see, they're both old. Look at your father, with three separate families!"

"Isn't there any place," cried Jon, "in all this beastly London where we can be alone?"

"Only a taxi."

"Let's get one, then."

When they were installed, Fleur said suddenly: "Are you going back to Robin Hill? I should like to see where you live, Jon. I'm staying with my aunt for the night, but I could get back in time for dinner. I wouldn't come to the house, of course."

Jon gazed at her enraptured.

"Splendid! I can show it you from the copse; we shan't meet anybody. There's a train at four."

The god of property and his Forsytes great and small, leisured, official, commercial, or professional, unlike the working classes, still worked their seven hours a day, so that those two of the fourth generation travelled down to Robin Hill in an empty first-class carriage, dusty and sun-warmed, of that too early train. They travelled, in blissful silence, holding each other's hands.

At the station there was nobody except porters and a villager or two unknown to Jon; they walked out up the lane which smelled of dust and honeysuckle.

For Jon—sure of her now, and without separation before him—it was a miraculous dawdle, more wonderful than those on the Downs, or along the river Thames. It was love-in-a-mist—an illuminated page of Life, where every word and smile, and every light touch they gave each other, were as little gold and red and blue butterflies and flowers and birds scrolled in among the text—a happy communing, without afterthought, and lasted twenty-seven minutes. They reached the coppice at the milking hour. Jon would not take her as far as the farmyard; only to where she could see the field leading up to the gardens, and the house beyond. They turned in among the larches, and suddenly, at the winding of the path, came on Irene sitting on an old log seat.

There are various kinds of shocks: to the vertebræ; to the nerves, to moral sensibility, and, more potent and lasting, to personal dignity. This last kind of shock Jon received, coming thus on his mother. He became suddenly conscious that he was doing an indelicate thing. To have brought Fleur down openly—yes! But to sneak her in! Consumed with shame, he put on as brazen a front as his nature would permit.

Fleur was smiling a little defiantly; his mother's startled face was changing quickly to the impersonal and gracious. It was she who uttered the first words:

"I'm very glad to see you. It was nice of Jon to think of bringing you down to us."

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"We weren't coming to the house," Jon blurted out: "I just wanted Fleur to see where I lived."

His mother said quietly:

"Won't you come up and have tea?"

Feeling that he had but aggravated his breach of breeding, he heard Fleur answer:

"Thanks very much. I have to get back to dinner. I met Jon by accident, and we thought it would be rather jolly."

How self-possessed!

"Of course; but you must have tea. We'll send you down to the station. My husband will enjoy seeing you."

The expression of his mother's eyes, resting on him for a moment, cast Jon down level with the ground—a true worm. Then she led on, and Fleur followed. He felt like a child, trailing after those two, who were talking so easily about Spain and Wansdon, and the house up there beyond the trees and grassy slope. He watched the fencing of their eyes, taking each other in—the two beings he loved most in the world.

He could see his father sitting under the oak tree; and suffered in advance all the loss of caste he must go through in the eyes of that tranquil figure with his knees crossed, thin, old, and elegant; already he could feel the faint irony which would come into his voice and smile.

"This is Fleur Forsyte, Jolyon; Jon brought her down to see the house. Let's have tea at once—she has to catch a train. Jon, tell them, dear, and telephone to the Dragon for a car."

To leave her alone with them was strange, and yet, as no doubt his mother had foreseen, the least of evils at the moment; so he ran up into the house. Now he would not see Fleur alone again—not for a minute, and they had arranged no further meeting! When he returned under cover of the maids and teapots, there was not a trace of awkwardness under the tree; it was all within himself, but not the less for that. They were talking of the gallery off Cork Street.

"We back numbers," his father was saying, "are awfully anxious to find out why we can't appreciate this new stuff. You and Jon must tell us."

"It's supposed to be satiric, isn't it?" said Fleur.

He saw his father smile. "Satiric? Oh! I think it's more than that. What do you say, Jon?"

"I don't know at all," stammered Jon. His father's face had a sudden grimness.

"The young are tired of us, our gods and our ideals. Off with their heads, they say—smash their idols! And let's get back to—nothing! And, by Jove, they've done it! Jon's a poet. He'll be going in, too, and stamping on what's left of us. Property, beauty, sentiment—all smoke. We mustn't own anything nowadays, not even our feelings. They stand in the way of—nothing."

Jon listened, bewildered, almost outraged by his father's words, behind which he felt a meaning that he could not reach. He didn't want to stamp on anything!

"Nothing's the god of to-day," continued Jolyon; "we're back where the Russians were sixty years ago, when they started Nihilism."

"No, Dad," cried Jon suddenly; "we only want to *live*, and we don't know how, because of the past—that's all!"

"By George!" said Jolyon, "that's profound, Jon. Is it your own? The Past! Old ownerships, old passions, and—the aftermath. Let's have cigarettes."

Conscious that his mother had lifted her hand to her lips, quickly, as if to hush something, Jon handed the cigarettes. He lighted his father's and Fleur's, then took one himself. Had he taken the knock that Val had spoken of? He noticed that the smoke was blue when he had not puffed, grey when he had; he liked the sensation in his nose and the sense of equality it gave him. He was glad no one said: "So you've begun!" He felt less young.

Fleur looked at her watch, and rose. His mother went with her into the house. Jon stayed with his father, puffing at his cigarette.

"See her into the car, old man," said Jolyon, "and when she's gone, ask your mother to come back to me."

Jon went. He waited in the hall. He saw her into the car. There was no chance for any word; hardly for a pressure of the hand. He waited all that evening for something to be said to him. Nothing was said. Nothing might have happened. He went up to bed, and in the mirror on his dressing table met himself. He did not speak, nor did the image; but both looked as if they thought the more.

(Fleur's visit to Robin Hill having resulted in a meeting with Jon's parents, the two young people have, as it were, thrown down the gauntlet. In spite of Fleur's conjectures, they are still in the dark as to the true nature of the family feud. How Fleur learns the truth and makes a gallant bid for her happiness and Jon's is related in the May instalment.)

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The Next War.

By V. Quirk.

To-day, in spite of those who sleep in Flanders' fields, one cannot pick up a newspaper without seeing references to "the next war." For this reason it seems opportune to remind people exactly what war means. A famous American General once observed: "War is hell!" He was not far wrong.—[Ed. R.M.]

DURING the last war women said passionately, hearing of some fresh and terrible slaughter: "There will be no more wars after this." But the men said, sucking their pipes: "As long as there's a world there'll be wars," and proceeded to argue about the matter.

As though there is any need to argue about it! Who dreams of disputing the fact that murder is a crime? Yet what is war but murder on a gigantic scale? What is war but murder, committed not in rage or wickedness by desperate or villainous characters, but with shuddering and deep distaste by mild and civilised men, filled with rum and stimulated by artificial hate to do in fury what they've been trained by tradition and religion to abhor and abstain from?

I have said these things before, and men

have said, patiently and with some masculine amusement: "But war is not murder. Murder is committed for private motives. War is a matter of national honour——"

"Words!" I interrupted. "What is the nation? We, the men and women of a country—we are the nation; not a handful of men playing chess with people's lives and calling it diplomacy." We are the nation, and we are women as well as men, and women aren't content with phrases. They don't want to be stuffed with pretty sayings as with sweetmeats. They want to know what it's all about. They want to know what the problem is that cannot be solved by something less than carnage. National honour! It would be to the honour of a nation to save its people, not to sacrifice it.

"Would you have had the Germans walk over us, then?" I anticipate that question. I'll answer it. No, I would not have had the Germans walk over us, but I'd have let the German women and the Belgian women, the French women and English women, have had their say in the matter first, and then

there'd have been no war. For however antagonistic women of different countries may be, however violent, however contemptuous, they'd make friends somehow rather than offer their men to death. And that is what politicians do when, with many fine words, they decide to declare war.

Women may be less reasonable than men in the lesser things of life, but with life itself they have the greater wisdom. They know that even if a war were to prove anything, even then it would not be worth while. For there is no quarrel in the whole world big enough to warrant it being ended by bloodshed.

It is the instinct of the smallest schoolboy to say: "Fight it out," and "The best man wins." The girl says, in surprise: "What was it all for? You don't prove you're right by hitting the hardest, do you?" It is the instinct of women to conserve, not to destroy.

Remind me of the excited ladies who offered unfit men white feathers in the street; remind me of the violent expressions of hate reported to have been said by German women, and I'll not deny their existence. But who judges a people by the freaks in a Barnum and Bailey show? The world consists of the average man and woman, not the exceptional; and to the average woman war

["*THE NEXT WAR*" *continued overleaf.*]

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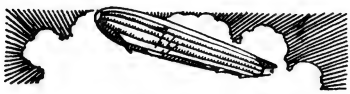
means not the waving of flags and the wearing of uniforms, but agony and death.

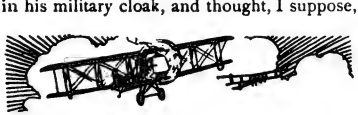
Little is said of the average woman. She doesn't write to the papers or stand on a platform. She is too busy. She is the wife of a man and the mother of children. In time of war childless women can shout out "Kill," but the mothers keep silent. They see to their houses, and watch their boys go out to be trained for battle and shudder through sleepless nights. Nobody hears or sees them but their own families and their own friends. But the bold girls hysterically ogling the soldiers in the streets, and the white-feather fanatics, they blazon themselves



abroad and the unthinking label them "Our Women," and say that women have more of the war-lust than men.

They are not our women. They are our mistakes. Their soldier-madness is not patriotism, but hysteria. They were the loudest attackers of the ex-Kaiser, and they had most of his mania.

That perverted epileptic once said: "Women of Germany—If I ask for your fathers, sons, and brothers, you must give them gladly to the Fatherland." And his voice vibrated dramatically as he dared to say those words, and he held the reins of his picturesque war-horse and preened himself in his military cloak, and thought, I suppose,



what an Emperor he was. And the women of Germany gave up their fathers and sons and brothers, wondering why, but keeping silent; for they, too, had been stuffed with fine phrases, of which "national honour" was one. But fine phrases bring no comfort when a country is humped up with graves.

"Give your sons to your country." Women do that when they give them birth. A land wants live men, not dead men. War is a taking away, not a giving.

Women are bringers to life, not senders to death. That is why they are temperamentally opposed to war.

Of war itself I have nothing to say. We know too well what it means. But what of the end of a war? What does it bring? It brings victory to one side and defeat to the other, all of which sounds very simple. But what do defeat and victory prove? That one side is wrong and the other is right? Certainly not. Many wars have been won by the aggressors, and that is too terrible to reflect upon. The mind baulks at it. In this war, thank God, the aggressors were defeated. The victory was to us. But what has it brought us? I can tell you. It has brought blindness, deformity, madness, disease, industrial unrest, poverty on the one hand, profiteering on the other. That's what it has brought us, and we got it all at the cost of young men's lives and at the cost of the terror and sorrow of women, and that last is the greater cost, for it is sometimes easier to die than to go on living when life is existence bereft of the beloved.

What has the victory brought us? Not one of the things that were promised: "A

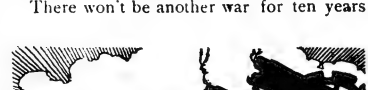
new world"; "a repentant Germany"; England, Belgium, France, and America all joining hands and playing ring-a-ring-a-roses; all of us living happily ever after.

The world is the same old world, only worse; Germany is baffled and bewildered, not repentant; America is saying she won the War, and we're saying we did. France has been vexed with us once or twice, and has openly said so. Belgium is almost forgotten.

And religion? The clergy told us that we needed a war to restore our faith in God. After the victory, all the churches would be full. Are they? The picturedromes are, but not the churches. Freak religions have never before been so many, and so varied. I swear that more people have lost religion than have found it since this War. A soldier once said to me: "The crucifixion once filled me with awe, but it doesn't now." We, too, have had our Gethsemane. We, too, could have said: "By mine agony and bloody sweat."

Suffering men feel too vividly to reason with calmness and restraint. Physical suffering does not refine the spirit, it distorts it.

There won't be another war for ten years



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at least because the memory of the last one is too fresh in our minds, but memories die. If men are left to themselves, they'll be capable of trying again to settle some political argument by the wholesale and organised murder known as war. But the women won't let them. We're not again going to be driven into delirium by newspaper headlines, and Press stunts, by political intrigues, and by diplomacy worked in the dark. We're not going to be told war is a man's business, and patted indulgently on the back. War is our business too. Aren't we half the world and more? Aren't the men who die our men?

Womanhood has no nationality. The women of the belligerent countries may have prayed in different languages, but they prayed for the same things. Their terror was the same, and their blind and secret fury; all, all the same. They may have asked for Victory, but they asked for their men's lives first.

There are paragraphs in the papers exhorting us to try and get back to pre-war conditions. Couldn't you weep at it? Can't you hear a million death-rattles? The asylums are full, thousands of children are fatherless, and we are told to try and get back to pre-war conditions! We are told that wisely, for the world was better before the War than it is now. But all that agony and terror for nothing! All that massacre of youth! Just to get back to where we were before! Think of the promises given to us all; think of the Utopia so glibly described to us "after the War"; and, if you can bear to do it, compare words with facts.

Many wrongs, many injustices, many quarrels will always arise, but war will not remove them. One sin can't cure another. And war, the biggest of all crimes, is sin indeed.

Leave the next war to the women, and they'll finish it before it starts.

Incidents from
the Domestic Life of

Mrs. Bindle

By Herbert Jenkins.

Read how Mrs. Bindle—with the aid of a mop, a piece of hearthstone, and a house-flannel—defended her home against the man who destroyed her geraniums.

Read how Mrs. Bindle took a chill, and how unattractive heaven seemed to her and how desirable earthly joys.

Read of the coming of little Joey, and how Mrs. Bindle manifested a more human side to her character.

Read how Bindle goes to chapel, and what came of it.

IX

Pearson's Magazine.

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Mirth.

By "Taffrail."

I.

It was no fault of Jimmy Tremayne's that he had fallen in love.

Mirth, to call her by the fanciful but not ungraceful name be-towed upon her by her parents, was made to be fallen in love with, as are most girls with eyes like soft blue-grey velvet, impertinent noses, smiling mouths, even white teeth, and complexions like cream and roses.

Her colouring was perfect, and so was her rippling hair, deep honey-co'our with reddish lights in it when she moved. She could sit upon it, she told him, and Jimmy, whenever he met her, became possessed of an insane longing to pull it down, to stroke it, and to gather up great bunches of it in his hands and caress it with his fingers.

Jimmy, being a naval officer, had wandered a good deal. He liked feminine society. He had danced, played tennis and otherwise diverted himself with girls at Southsea, Plymouth, Malta, Hong-Kong, and other places too numerous to mention. Several times he had imagined himself to be in love. But Mirth knocked all his previous female acquaintances into the proverbial cocked hat.

She had been staying at an hotel at Torquay with a pseudo-invalid aunt, when Jimmy's destroyer, with various other men-of-war, happened to be visiting Torbay. The mother of Jimmy's Sub-Lieutenant happened to be an old acquaintance of the aunt's and, at his parent's bidding, the youth went dutifully to the hotel to pay his respects. He returned to the ship with the information that the old lady herself was inclined to be "horse-faced and long in the tooth," but that the girl she had staying with her was one of the prettiest "bits of skirt" he had ever seen. At the ball ashore the same evening, given in honour of the fleet's visit, he had met Mirth again, and in a rash moment had introduced his skipper. Jimmy, with the greatest willingness in the world, and quite unblushingly, had proceeded to cut his junior out.

The ships only stayed in Torbay for ten days, but Jimmy did not waste a moment. Within forty-eight hours of their arrival Mirth, accompanied, for the sake of respectability, by a chaperon barely older than herself, was lunching on board the *Whimbrel*, where she exhibited a truly feminine interest in the cretonne curtains in Jimmy's cabin, his blue silk bunk-spread, and the photographs of his own and other people's sisters hanging upon the white-enamelled bulkheads. Within five days they had been to two tennis parties and had played golf together—without a chaperon.

Then a week after their first meeting came the flagship's ball, when Jimmy, not the least abashed, scrawled his name through fully three-quarters of the dances on her programme.

"I hope you don't mind," he said, looking at her and longing to tickle the nape of her neck where the hair started to curl. "I've been rather greedy."

"Greedy?" she answered, looking up at him with a smile and a twinkle in her eyes, which looked deep violet in the glare of the electric lights. "Well, perhaps you have a little; but—well, I don't think I mind, if you don't."

And Jimmy's heart jumped.

It was after supper, throwing discretion to the winds, that he succumbed altogether.

He inveigled Mirth into someone's cabin, which had been set apart as a sitting-out place, carefully drew the curtain, and for just ninety seconds discussed the excellence of the deck for dancing upon, the capability of the band and the beauty of the decorations. Then, fixing his eyes on the water-bottle in the rack over the folding washstand, he suddenly became silent and leant back in his chair with a frown and a sigh.

"What's the matter?" asked Mirth.

"Matter?" he said slowly, not daring to look round. "I'm only thinking—er—I'm thinking how awfully fond I am of you!"

For a moment or two he heard nothing but her breathing, a little faster than usual.

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Then nervously turning his head, he saw her looking at him with a little smile playing round the corners of her mouth.

"Are you quite sure you mean that?" she asked softly, casting her eyes to the ground and tapping the floor with one brocade-covered foot. "Are you absolutely sure?" It was almost a whisper.

"Sure?" he answered. "Sure! Oh, my dear! Aren't I head over ears in love with you? Don't I worship—Lord! I'd do anything to make you happy!"

She looked at him for a moment as if she were summing him up.

"I am so glad!" she said simply. "I—oh, I can't tell you how happy I feel!"

In a moment he was on his feet and his arms were round her. Half-bending over her chair, he kissed her face, her hair. Evidently it was *de rigueur* to snatch the lady in one's arms, to squeeze her tightly, and to murmur gently in her ear. This one seemed to like it.

How long it went on before they again became normal I do not profess to know, nor does Jimmy. All I am aware of is that there was the usual fly in the ointment, cockroach in the soup, caterpillar in the salad, or whatever you may choose to call it.

It had never occurred to Jimmy that Mirth's parents might be rich, and that she was accustomed to luxury which he could never give her as his wife. Man-like, he had not appraised her possible income by her clothes, did not realise that the frock she was wearing at the moment probably cost thirty guineas, or that a couple of years' pay would hardly have bought the simple string of pearls round her neck. He did not stop to consider these things. It did not enter into his head that Mirth's father and mother might object to their daughter becoming the wife of a naval officer with little beyond his pay.

His income was probably sufficient to enable him to support a wife in the way that many other naval officers supported theirs. But, as a bachelor, he had little idea of the financial anxieties, of the stringent economy practised by his married friends who were not blessed with private means. He knew nothing of the weary drudgery of keeping up appearances, or the unutterable discomfort of living in a succession of furnished apartments or houses in this naval port or that, with no possibility of a settled home for years to come.

So what Mirth told him later on, when they were discussing things, came rather as a bolt from the blue.

"You know, Jimmy dear," she said, "I'm afraid there will be trouble with Mother and Father. They are very keen that I should"—she hesitated—"well, that I should marry someone else—someone with a title."

"Oh, heaven!" he burst out. "Is it as bad as all that?"

"I hope not," she replied, smiling. "But, you see, since Father became so disgustingly rich and they made him a baronet, he's terribly proud of himself and keen on all sorts of things so far as I'm concerned. It's all very stupid, of course," she added. "We aren't anybody really, and before the War we weren't particularly well-off. But if I marry someone he doesn't approve of, he may be rather—well, nasty about it."

Jimmy looked very disturbed.

"If I'd realised that I'd never have said anything," he muttered guiltily. "I've hardly a bean besides my pay, but somehow I thought that would be enough to rub along on as a married man. Anyhow, I'll go and see him."

"Yes-s. Perhaps you'd better," she agreed. "Go as soon as you can, though. He's just bought a yacht, and as soon as she's ready he's going for a cruise."

"Bit late in the year for yachting, isn't it?"

The girl laughed.

"I dare say," she said. "But you don't know Father. He's like a child with a new toy. I only hope he doesn't insist on my going with him."

"Anyhow, I'll write and then go and see him," said Jimmy, feeling very brave. "Suppose he does refuse, Mirth?" he queried anxiously.

"Oh, my dear," she breathed softly, putting her hand on his shoulder and looking him full in the eyes. "Don't think for one minute that I mind if he does cut me off with a shilling. I'll stick to you. I'd willingly be a pauper—with you."

"My darling girl!" he answered, kissing her on the lips.

II.

A fortnight later, at eleven twenty-five in the morning, Jimmy Tremayne found himself whirling skywards in a mahogany-panelled lift towards the office of Sir Roderick Eydon, Bart. With no false hopes as to the nature of his reception, he was feeling supremely nervous and not a little unhappy. He had written to Mirth's father the day after the flagship's ball, explaining his circumstances and exactly what had occurred. He wrote straight from his heart, but the typewritten reply on the firm's headed paper, beginning "Sir" and

["*MIRTH*" *continued overleaf.*]

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ending "Yours faithfully," the palpable work of a secretary, had been curt and unsympathetic, if not actually discourteous.

Anyhow, it was a blank refusal to sanction the engagement, and the worst of it was, it practically put him on his honour not to write to the girl he loved, and he had no option but to obey. He had seen her twice after their engagement. Then had come a peremptory telegram ordering her return home, since which he had heard nothing. One thing that he was fully determined upon was that he would beard the ogre in his castle; but for eleven days, until he could obtain forty-eight hours' leave to visit London on the score of urgent private affairs, he had endured an agony of suspense.

The lift stopped.

"First turnin' to the right and you'll see the name on the door, sir," said the attendant, flinging open the grille.

Jimmy stepped out, feeling as if he were leaving the condemned cell for the scaffold. He walked along the corridor with his heart in his boots, halted a moment before a glass-panelled door bearing the baronet's name in large black letters, pushed it open, and stepped inside.

He found himself in an outer office, confronted by a mahogany slab like a shop counter. Three male clerks and a lady typist ceased work to look at him.

A few minutes later he was being ushered into the presence of the ogre himself.

A fat, clean-shaven man with a face the colour of a ripe tomato was seated at a kneehole writing-table in the window, smoking a cigar.

"So it's you," he said, in a tone of veiled hostility, toying with Jimmy's card and puffing a cloud of smoke as he regarded his visitor with appraising eyes. "Take a chair."

"Thank you. I can talk better standing," Jimmy answered, painfully aware that the baronet had neither risen nor volunteered to shake hands.

"You want to marry my daughter?"

"I do," Jimmy replied.

"H'm," murmured Sir Roderick, still regarding him attentively. "Your family's all right. Mentioned in Debrett, aren't you?"

"I have that honour," said Jimmy.

"M'yes. I know all about it. I know your father may step into the title if your uncle doesn't marry again, and that you're the eldest son. Question is," he added, "what d'you propose to live on if you marry my daughter, eh?"

"My total income at the moment is about a thousand a year, as I told you in my letter."

Sir Roderick sniffed. "What about expectations?" he demanded.

"I haven't any," said Jimmy simply.

"Well, I like your brazen cheek coming here and telling me that!" the baronet burst out, dropping his cigar ash down the front of his waistcoat in his agitation. "The damned cheek of it! D'you think I want to keep you for the rest of my life? D'you think I'll allow my daughter a decent income for you to live upon? I've met your sort before, and you won't get my daughter, I'll tell you straight."

"That rather depends on your daughter," said Jimmy, beside himself with anger. "If you were a younger man I'd hit you. As it is, I'll merely do this."

He took the presentation silver inkstand from the table and capsized it neatly over Sir Roderick's blotter. Two streams, one ruby and the other blue-black, flowed gaily across the table and cascaded on to Sir Roderick's lap, and thence, *vid* his delicate grey vicuna trousers and suède-topped boots, to the Turkey carpet.

"There!" said Jimmy, his eyes blazing as the elder man watched the damage with his mouth wide open and his eyes goggling. "Perhaps that will teach you that two can play at bad manners. Good-morning, Sir Roderick."

The baronet, apoplectic with rage, could not reply; he merely spluttered.

Jimmy left the room hastily. The frantic pealing of an electric bell sounded from the outer office as he hurried along the corridor.

III.

The gale had sprung up overnight, and now, at nine o'clock in the morning, it was blowing great guns from the south-west, with a heavy, toppling sea. The glass had fallen alarmingly. The sky, dismally grey, patched here and there with great bunches of inky cloud, was streaked with wisps of ragged white mare's tails, teased and shredded by the blast as they streamed down from windward.

Wind and sea were on the starboard quarter, and except for her deep, irregular rolling and an occasional violent plunge as the stern lifted to a particularly heavy wave, the *Whimbrel* made tolerably good weather as she steamed up-Channel. But Jimmy, glancing astern at the leaden-coloured, foam-crested combers charging ceaselessly down from the horizon, thanked his lucky stars they were steaming with instead of against the sea.

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The *Whimbrel* was shaping a course for the Needles Channel on her way to Portsmouth. The sloping hump of Portland and the Bill had faded out of sight on the port quarter, and just before the port beam, distant about four miles, lay the steep, reddish cliffs of the stretch of coast between St. Albans' Head and Anvil Point. The seas, with the full fury of the gale behind them, dashed madly round their rock-bound base. For fully a couple of hundred yards offshore the backwash played confusedly in a leaping, tumultuous welter.

The Sub, bracing himself against the rolling, was vainly endeavouring to take a bearing of the headland with a standard compass, while Jimmy, his oilskin buttoned to his chin and his glasses to his eyes, was idly scanning the coast.

"Thank heaven we didn't pass it too close," he said to the Sub. "There's a deuce of a tumble going on in there. Hullo!" he added, his attitude stiffening, as he wedged himself against a stanchion the better to steady his binoculars. "Signalman!"

"Sir!"

"Run your glass along the land and tell me if you see anything fairly close inshore, just under that hummock."

The man knelt down, leant his telescope on the rail, and gazed through it.

"Small craft of some kind, sir," he said at last. "I see her now an' then, as she lifts on a sea."

"Thought I wasn't mistaken," Jimmy murmured. "But what in the name of heaven is she doing in there? She's on a dead lee shore and not far from that tide race."

"Just about in it, sir," corrected the Sub, his glasses levelled. "It extends fully a couple of miles from the coast when it's blowing like this."

"Silly blighted idiots!" the skipper growled. "Serves 'em jolly well right if they do come to grief. However, I think we'd better go down and have a look at 'em. Bring her round to north, Sub."

"Handsomely!* Oh, go handsomely* with the helm!" he shouted a moment later, as his subordinate passed an order to the helmsman on the lower bridge. "You'll carry away every bally thing on the upper deck, and have a defect list as long as my arm, if you go jambing her round like that. Look at the seas. If one of them comes on board solid, we'll get it properly in the neck. Go easy, you perishin' Jehu!"

The Sub rectified his error, and the destroyer, lurching drunkenly as she went, crept slowly round to the new course. Jimmy shouted an order down the voice-pipe for an increase in speed. The engine-room telegraph gong jangled in reply.

In about eight minutes the *Whimbrel* steamed into the tide race and the character of the sea changed. It lost its regular rhythm, became heavier and very confused as the steep hummocks rose, toppled over, fell, and erupted against each other in insensate fury. Lashed by the wind, sheets of flying spindrift went hurtling to leeward across the troubled face of the sea. Heavy masses of water, rearing themselves up alongside, swept constantly across the destroyer's deck.

But if things were bad for the *Whimbrel*, they were infinitely worse for the yacht a few cables ahead. What she was doing at sea at all in such weather baffled any seaman's comprehension. She was merely some rich man's plaything, a smart, graceful, black-painted little craft, with a salmon-coloured water-line and swan bow, single yellow funnel, a row of varnished deck-houses amidships, and two slender pole masts. All very well for Cowes week, or a cruise further afield in fine and settled weather, but a mere death-trap during the equinoctial gales in the Channel.

How she had survived up-to-date was a mystery. Her slender bows, flung skywards on the bosom of the seas, and then falling, sliced into the heart of the combers which broke on board and sent the solid water foaming aft along her deck in cataract after cataract. Seas leapt on board amidships, over the low overhanging stern, everywhere, until nothing could be seen but the top of her funnel and the twin mastheads over a deluge of blinding spray.

Her propeller, Jimmy noticed, was not revolving. No feather of smoke appeared from her funnel. She was obviously broken down—doing her best to claw her way off that terrible rock-bound coast with an absurd trysail and foresail set on the foremast. A red ensign, union down, streamed at half-mast at the main.

The coast was little more than a mile distant. The yacht's sails, instead of giving her headway, caused her to drive to leeward all the faster. Unless something were done, half-an-hour or forty minutes would see her dashed to pieces among those murderous rocks at the base of the cliffs.

Jimmy, swearing under his breath at the crass folly of anyone daring to take such a craft to sea in the prevailing conditions, circled round and approached her cautiously.

"Yacht ahoy!" he bellowed through a

["*MIRTH*" *continued overleaf.*]

* "Handsomely," *i.e.*, gently and with care.

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megaphone, seeing a disconsolate little knot of people in oilskins clustered under the lee of the deckhouse.

A figure detached itself from the group and waved an arm. Someone else handed him a megaphone.

"Broken down!" came his shout. "Motor—damage. Owner says—take us all off before—drift ashore! Women on board!"

"I'll be damned if I do!" Jimmy muttered angrily to himself, with all the instinctive dislike of a seaman at the proposal to abandon a ship until every effort to save her had failed.

He gave some orders to the Sub, who left the bridge hurriedly, and once more put the megaphone to his lips.

"I'm going to have a shot at towing you," he bawled to the yacht. "When I—what's that you say?"

"Won't be—time," came the answer. "Making water—owner says—take off crew. Driving fast—rocks—leeward!"

"I'm going to have a try, anyhow!" Jimmy shouted back, longing to hurl something at the man's head. "Now, listen carefully to what I'm going to say, and for heaven's sake and your own keep your wits about you!"

Word by word, as the *Whimbrel's* ship's company were making the necessary arrangements, Jimmy explained his plan. Did the people in the yacht understand?

They evidently did, for the man with the megaphone waved an arm, went back to the group and explained matters to someone in authority.

The coast was barely three-quarters of a mile distant. They were drifting towards it fast.

Her preparations complete, the *Whimbrel* steamed slowly round the yacht and laid a thick trail of oil fuel, which, spreading rapidly, covered the sea with a viscous, iridescent scum. The result exceeded Jimmy's wildest expectations, for, though the seas still rose and fell, they no longer broke.

A coir hawser with a bunch of lifebuoys at the end of it was then paid out astern, and circling to windward of the yacht Jimmy manœuvred his ship so as to tow it across her bows. It was for the crew of the yacht to catch the floating hawser and to haul it on board, having done which they must haul away until they came to the end of the *Whimbrel's* flexible steel towing wire, which they must make fast. The destroyer would do the rest.

But at the first attempt the yachtsmen, angling over the bows with an inadequate boathook, missed the hawser altogether. A groan went up from the *Whimbrel's* men, while Jimmy, on the bridge, anathematised all yachtsmen for a lubberly set of scallywags.

The coast was appreciably closer.

"This time you'd better lower a man over the side in a bowline!" he howled as they passed close to the yacht before trying it again. "It won't kill him if he does get a wet shirt!"

The second attempt was successful. A man, lowered from the yacht's short bowsprit with a rope round his chest, caught the bight of the hawser with his feet as it floated towards him, transferred it to his hands, and passed it on board to those waiting to receive it. He was ducked repeatedly as the yacht plunged, but he succeeded.

A cheer of relief floated across from the destroyer.

"It'll be touch and go!" said Jimmy nervously, anxiously eyeing the coast, now a bare half-mile distant. "If they make a mess of it, or if anything carries away, it'll be Kingdom Come for the whole crowd of 'em!"

He felt physically sick. Suppose the attempt did fail and the yacht was driven ashore and dashed to pieces before his very eyes?

He would be powerless to help the unhappy souls on board her. They would be mangled and torn to pieces by the angry sea among the sharp-fanged rocks at the base of the cliffs. And there were women on board. Oh, heaven!

Another cheer burst out from the crowd of men on the destroyer's deck. Those on board the yacht had just hauled the end of the wire on board and were making it fast, but the calming effect of the oil was rapidly becoming dissipated. The sea was getting worse every instant—the shore was very near.

Jimmy held his breath and watched.

A man in the bows of the yacht waved an arm to signify that the wire had been secured, and Jimmy, with a sigh of relief, whispered an order down the voice-pipe.

The *Whimbrel* moved slowly ahead to tauten out the tow. Flake after flake of wire vanished over the stern. Jimmy watched it, heart in mouth. The least mistake now and the yacht and all on board her were doomed to certain destruction.

"End oh!" came a shout from the destroyer's deck.

Jimmy, his heart fluttering, stopped the engines as the last flake flopped into the sea. The wire took the strain, shot dripping out of the water, twanging like a harpstring, and then fell back with a splash as the yacht started to forge ahead.

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"Thank heaven!" he murmured. "Oh, thank heaven!"

A few hours later, with the *Eileen* still in tow, the *Whimbrel* crept into the comparative shelter of Swanage Bay and came to anchor.

Jimmy sent a party of men on board the yacht to do what they could to carry out temporary repairs, and ten minutes later, having made himself tolerably presentable, was rowed across himself.

He was received by the yacht's skipper, who, thanking him warmly for what he had done, explained how the *Eileen* had come to be at sea.

"The owner would have it," the man grumbled. "He thinks this craft is a blessed *Aquitania*, but I reckon he'll know better next time. We were bound for Weymouth, and twice I tried to turn back and run for shelter, but he's that obstinate he wouldn't have it. Then the seas started to break on board, and presently the motor-room filled up and put the engine out of action. We made water fast, and had nothing but hand-pumps to keep it under. Gosh! We'd have been corpsed by now if you hadn't turned up when you did."

Jimmy glanced round the once-trim deck. Deckhouses were splintered from top to bottom, deck fittings had been wrenched from their fastenings bulwarks had collapsed with the weight of the water, and all three boats had been washed from their davits, and the davits themselves twisted and bent.

The skipper conducted Jimmy to a once spick-and-span saloon under the bridge and left him. If the damage was apparent outside, it was infinitely more so within. The thick glass of many of the portholes had been smashed, and one of the solid teak doors had been burst off its hinges. The place was saturated with sea-water, and silk cushions, curtains, pictures, chairs, the remains of a solid mahogany table and bookcase, a small piano, broken glass, many books, and the expensive carpet all lay on the floor in several inches of dirty water.

In a minute or two Jimmy heard someone coming up the narrow circular stairway leading from the cabins below. It was a woman, grey-haired, middle-aged, and rather stout. Her eyes were kindly, and ordinarily she would have been fresh-complexioned, but her pallid cheeks and the dark shadows under her eyes told of the strain through which she had lately passed.

"I must apologise for my husband," she said, coming forward and shaking Jimmy's hand. "He has been badly cut and bruised about the head, but will be here in a minute. Meanwhile, let me tell you how deeply grateful we are to you and your men for saving our lives. If you hadn't come we——"

Her voice was husky with emotion. She released his hand, shrugged her shoulders, and turned away. There were tears in her eyes.

Jimmy felt a fool.

"Oh, it wouldn't have been as bad as all that," he lied, blushing all over. "I'm very glad——"

"My husband," she interrupted, as someone else came upstairs.

The newcomer, a stout, clean-shaven man with a bandage round his head, came forward with a limp. "My dear sir!" he began, holding out his hand. "My dear sir! I hardly know how to express my——"

"Sir Roderick Eydon!" Jimmy gasped, peering at him.

"Tremayne!" echoed the baronet, equally surprised.

For a moment they stood there staring at each other, each waiting for the other to speak. Then Sir Roderick's face relapsed into a grin, and he took Jimmy by the shoulder.

"Tremayne," he said awkwardly, "I was a bit harsh with you the other day, though you did get your own back by spilling the ink over my trousers and ruining the carpet. Well, I've thought better of it. A man who can do what you did is someone to be proud of. 'Pon my soul, sir," he continued impulsively, "I'll be pleased and happy to—er—make things as comfortable as I can. What do you think about it, Molly?" he added, turning to his wife.

"I always thought that you had been a little hasty, Roderick," she answered slowly, looking hard at Jimmy.

Jimmy could hardly believe his ears. He had heard no word of Mirth since the day they had said good-bye at Torquay. He had done his best, though unsuccessfully, to put her out of his mind. But now that fickle goddess Chance had smiled upon him—had given him what he prayed for. He could hardly believe it.

A light footstep sounded on the stairway.

Lady Eydon took her husband firmly by the arm, whispering something in his ear, and piloted him through the shattered doorway to the deck.

A well-known, girlish figure appeared at the top of the staircase.

"Mirth!" cried Jimmy, his heart [illegible] "Oh, Mirth!"

"Jimmy!" she answered softly. "Jimmy!"

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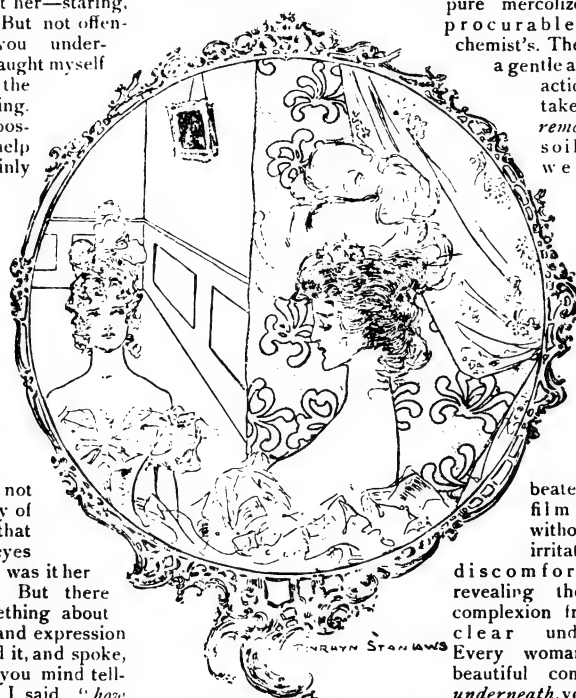

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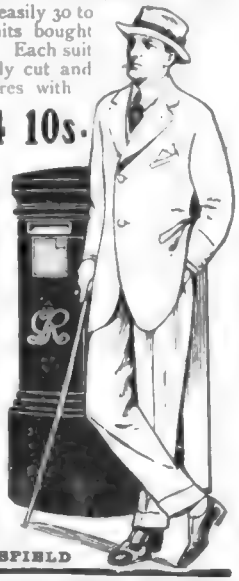

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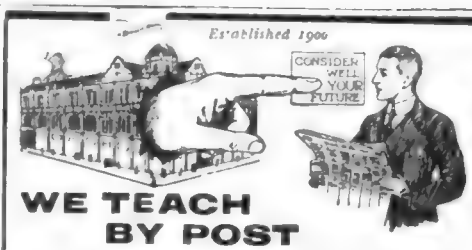

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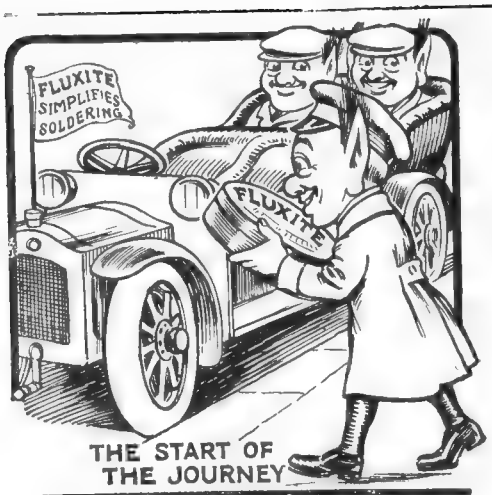

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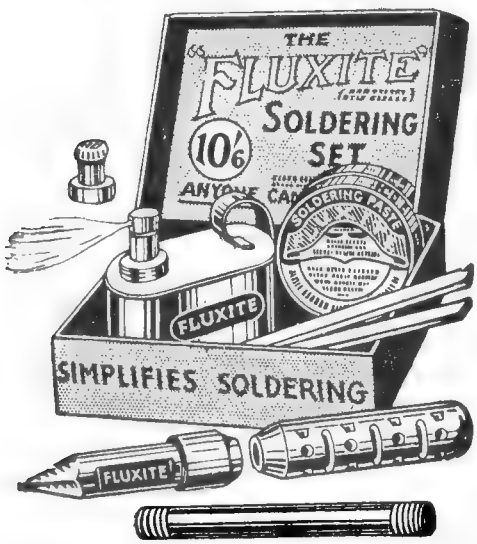

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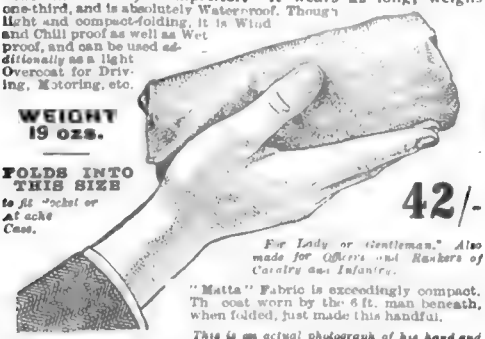

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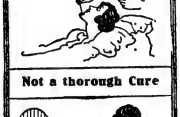

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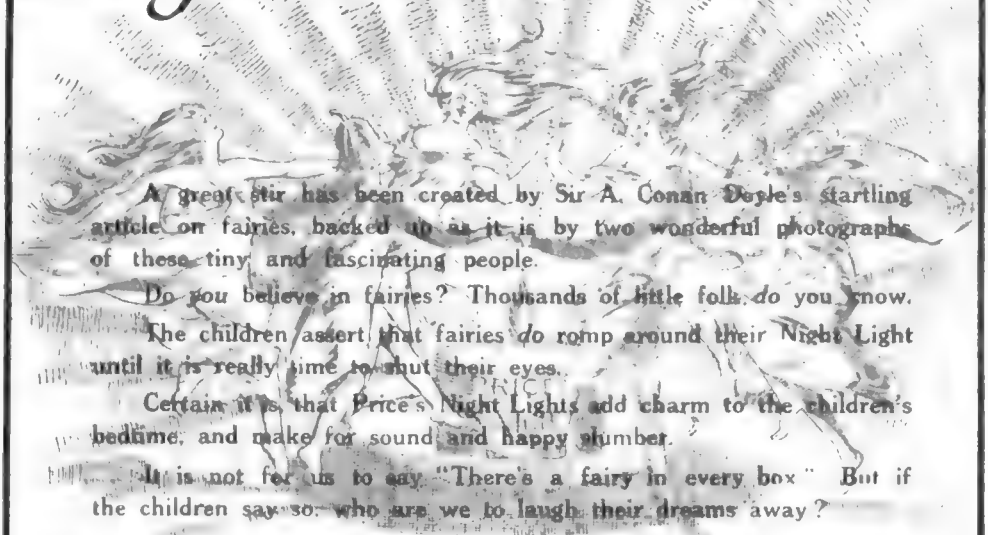

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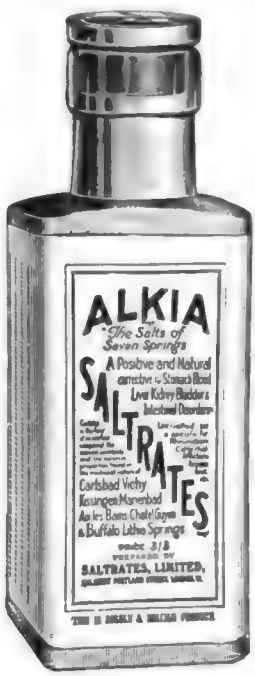

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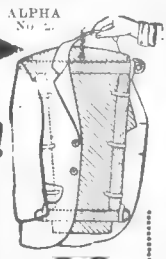

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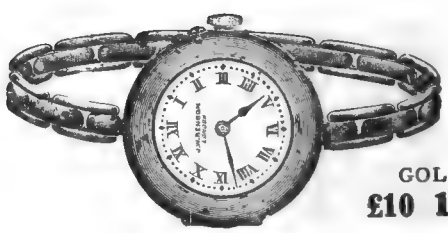

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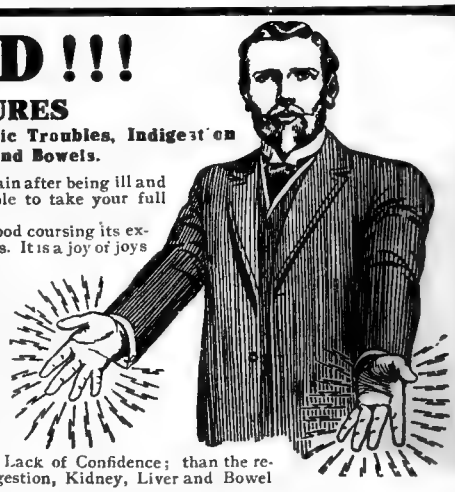

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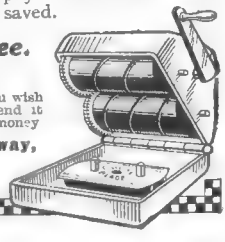

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Beauty Culture

Some Simple Recipes that give Startling Results.

By MIMOSA.

Getting Rid of Feminine Moustaches.

TO women who are annoyed by disfiguring downy hair growths a method of permanently eradicating the same will come as a piece of good news. For this purpose pure powdered pheminol may be used. Almost any chemist should be able to supply an ounce of this drug. The recommended treatment is designed not only to remove the disfiguring growth instantly, leaving no trace, but also to actually kill the hair roots without irritating the skin.

How to Have Thick and Pretty Hair.

SOAPS and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed ¼-lb. packages, which retail at half-a-crown. However, as this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, it really works out very cheaply in the end.

Blackheads, Oily Pores, &c.

THE new sparkling face-bath treatment rids the skin of blackheads, oiliness and enlarged pores almost instantly. It is perfectly harmless, pleasant and immediately effective. All you have to do is to drop a stymol tablet, obtained from the chemist's, in a glass of hot water, and after the resulting effervescence has subsided, dab the affected portions of the face freely with the liquid. When you dry the face you will find that the blackheads come right off on the towel, the large pores contract and efface themselves naturally and the greasiness is all gone, leaving the skin smooth, soft and cool. This treatment should be repeated a few times at intervals of several days, in order to make sure that the result shall be permanent.

Grey Hair Unnecessary.

ONE need not resort to the very questionable expedient of hair dye in order not to have grey hair. The grey hair can easily be changed back to a natural colour in a few days' time merely by the application of a simple old-fashioned and perfectly harmless home-made lotion. Procure from your chemist two ounces of tammalite concentrate and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply this to the hair a few times with a small sponge and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing your grey hair gradually darkening to the desired shade. The lotion is pleasant, not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way.

How to Discard an Unsightly Complexion.

HOW many women exclaim as they behold their ugly complexion in the mirror, "If I could only tear off this old skin!" and, do you know, it is now possible to do that very thing? Not to actually remove the entire skin all of a sudden; that would be too heroic a method and painful, too, I imagine. The worn-out cuticle comes off in such tiny particles, and so gradually—requiring about ten days to complete the transformation—it doesn't hurt a bit. Day by day the beautiful complexion underneath comes forth. Marvellous! No matter how muddy, rough, blotchy, or aged your complexion, you can surely discard it by this simple process. Just get some ordinary mercolized wax at your chemist's, apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the mornings.

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